CHILDREN'S BOOK
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LOS ANGELES

Leonora. O! Cecilia who would have thought you had a bad heart?
Oh no, no indeed! she has not, said little Louisa, running to
her with open arms.

Frances Maria Edgeworth
with her sister Anna's
love

THE BRACELETS,

THE LITTLE MERCHANTS,

BEING THE THIRD VOLUME

OF

THE PARENT'S ASSISTANT,

OR

STORIES FOR CHILDREN.

By MARIA EDGEWORTH,

AUTHOR OF PRACTICAL EDUCATION, AND LETTERS FOR LITERARY LADIES.

THE THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD,

BY G. WOODFALL, IN PATERNOSTER-ROW.

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THE BRACELETS.

IN a beautiful and retired part of England lived Mrs. Villars; a lady whose accurate underſtanding, benevolent heart, and ſteady temper peculiarly fitted her for the moſt difficult, as well as moſt important of all occupations—the education of youth. This taſk ſhe had undertaken; and twenty young perſons were put under her care, with the perfect confidence of their parents. No young people could be happier; they were good and gay, emulous, but not envious of each other; for Mrs. Villars was impartially juſt; her praiſe they felt to be the reward of merit, and her blame they knew to be the neceſſary conſequence of ill-conduct: to the one, therefore,

they patiently ſubmitted, and in the other conſciouſly rejoiced. They roſe with freſh cheerfulneſs in the morning, eager to purſue their various occupations; they returned in the evening with renewed ardor to their amuſements, and retired to reſt ſatisfied with themſelves, and pleaſed with each other.

Nothing ſo much contributed to preſerve a ſpirit of emulation in this little ſociety as a ſmall honorary diſtinction, given annually, as the prize of ſucceſsful application. The prize this year was peculiarly dear to each individual, as it was the picture of a friend whom they all dearly loved—it was the picture of Mrs. Villars in a ſmall bracelet. It wanted neither gold, pearls, nor precious ſtones, to give it value.

The two foremoſt candidates for this prize were Cecilia and Leonora. Cecilia was the moſt intimate friend of Leo-

nora, but Leonora was only the favourite companion of Cecilia.

Cecilia was of an active, ambitious, enterprising disposition; more eager in the pursuit, than happy in the enjoyment of her wishes. Leonora was of a contented, unaspiring, temperate character; not easily roused to action, but indefatigable when once excited. Leonora was proud, Cecilia was vain: her vanity made her more dependent upon the approbation of others, and therefore more anxious to please than Leonora; but that very vanity made her, at the same time, more apt to offend: in short, Leonora was the most anxious to avoid what was wrong, Cecilia the most ambitious to do what was right. Few of their companions loved, but many were led by Cecilia, for she was often successful; many loved Leonora,

but none were ever governed by her, for ſhe was too indolent to govern.

On the firſt day of May, about ſix o'clock in the evening, a great bell rang, to ſummon this little ſociety into a hall, where the prize was to be decided. A number of ſmall tables were placed in a circle in the middle of the hall; ſeats for the young competitors were raiſed one above another, in a ſemicircle, ſome yards diſtant from the table; and the judges chairs, under canopies of lilacs and laburnums, forming another ſemicircle, cloſed the amphitheatre. Every one put their writings, their drawings, their works of various kinds, upon the tables appropriated for each. How unſteady were the laſt ſteps to theſe tables! How each little hand trembled as it laid down its claims. Till this moment every one thought herſelf ſecure of ſucceſs, but now each felt an equal certainty of being excelled; and the heart

which a few minutes before exulted with hope, now palpitated with fear.

The works were examined, the preference adjudged; and the prize was declared to be the happy Cecilia's. Mrs. Villars came forward ſmiling with the bracelet in her hand: Cecilia was behind her companions, on the higheſt row; all the others gave way, and ſhe was on the floor in an inſtant. Mrs. Villars claſped the bracelet on her arm: the claſp was heard through the whole hall, and an univerſal ſmile of congratulation followed. Mrs. Villars kiſſed Cecilia's little hand; and "now," ſaid ſhe, "go and rejoice with your companions, the remainder of the day is your's."

Oh! you whoſe hearts are elated with ſucceſs, whoſe boſoms beat high with joy, in the moment of triumph, command yourſelves; let that triumph

be moderate, that it may be lasting. Consider, that though you are good, you may be better; and though wise, you may be weak.

As soon as Mrs. Villars had given her the bracelet, all Cecilia's little companions crowded round her, and they all left the hall in an instant; she was full of spirits and vanity—she ran on: running down the flight of steps which led to the garden, in her violent haste, Cecilia threw down the little Louisa. Louisa had a china mandarin in her hand, which her mother had sent her that very morning; it was all broken to pieces by her fall.

"Oh! my mandarin!" cried Louisa, bursting into tears. The crowd behind Cecilia suddenly stopped: Louisa sat on the lowest step, fixing her eyes upon the broken pieces; then turning round, she hid her face in her hands upon the step above her. In turning, Louisa

threw down the remains of the mandarin; the head, which she had placed in the socket, fell from the shoulders, and rolled bounding along the gravel walk. Cecilia pointed to the head, and to the socket, and burst out a laughing: the crowd behind laughed too. At any other time they would have been more inclined to cry with Louisa; but Cecilia had just been successful, and sympathy with the victorious often makes us forget justice. Leonora, however, preserved her usual consistency. "Poor Louisa!" said she, looking first at her, and then reproachfully at Cecilia. Cecilia turned sharply round, colouring, half with shame and half with vexation; "I could not help it, Leonora," said she.

"But you could have helped laughing, Cecilia."

"I didn't laugh at Louisa; and I surely may laugh, for it does nobody any harm."

"I am sure, however," replied Leonora, "I should not have laughed if I had——"

"No, to be sure you wouldn't, because Louisa is your favourite; I can buy her another mandarin the next time that the old pedlar comes to the door, if that's all.—I *can* do no more—*Can* I?" said she, turning round to her companions.

"No, to be sure," said they, "that's all fair."

Cecilia looked triumphantly at Leonora: Leonora let go her hand; she ran on, and the crowd followed. When she got to the end of the garden, she turned round to see if Leonora had followed her too; but was vexed to see her still sitting on the steps with Louisa. "I'm sure I can do no more than buy her another!—*Can* I?" said she again, appealing to her companions.

"No, to be ſure," ſaid they, eager to begin their plays.

How many did they begin and leave off, before Cecilia could be ſatisfied with any: her thoughts were diſcompoſed, and her mind was running upon ſomething elſe; no wonder then, that ſhe did not play with her uſual addreſs. She grew ſtill more impatient; ſhe threw down the nine-pins: "Come, let us play at ſomething elſe—at threading-the-needle," ſaid ſhe, holding out her hand. They all yielded to the hand which wore the bracelet. But Cecilia, diſſatisfied with herſelf, was diſcontented with every body elſe: her tone grew more and more peremptory.—One was too rude, another too ſtiff; one too ſlow, another too quick; in ſhort, every thing went wrong, and every body was tired of her humours.

The triumph of *ſucceſs* is abſolute but ſhort. Cecilia's companions at

length recollected, that though she had embroidered a tulip and painted a peach better than they, yet that they could play as well, and keep their tempers better: she was thrown out. Walking towards the house, in a peevish mood, she met Leonora: she passed on.

"Cecilia!" cried Leonora.

"Well, what do you want with me?"

"Are we friends?"

"You know best."

"We are; if you will let me tell Louisa, that you are sorry——"

Cecilia, interrupting her, "Oh! pray let me hear no more about Louisa!"

"What! not confess that you were in the wrong! Oh, Cecilia! I had a better opinion of you."

"Your opinion is of no consequence to me now; for you don't love me."

"No, not when you are unjuſt, Cecilia."

"Unjuſt! I am not unjuſt: and if I were, you are not my governeſs."

"No; but am not I your friend?"

"I don't deſire to have ſuch a friend, who would quarrel with me for happening to throw down little Louiſa—how could I tell that ſhe had a mandarin in her hand? and when it was broken, could I do more than promiſe her another?—Was that unjuſt?"

"But you know, Cecilia——"

"*I know*," ironically, "I know, Leonora, that you love Louiſa better than you do me; that's the injuſtice!"

"If I did," replied Leonora, gravely, "it would be no injuſtice, if ſhe deſerved it better."

"How can you compare Louiſa to me!" exclaimed Cecilia, indignantly.

Leonora made no anſwer, for ſhe was really hurt at her friend's conduct: ſhe

walked on to join the reſt of her companions. They were dancing in a round upon the graſs: Leonora declined dancing, but they prevailed upon her to ſing for them; her voice was not ſo ſprightly, but it was ſweeter than uſual.—Who ſung ſo ſweetly as Leonora? or who danced ſo nimbly as Louiſa?

Away ſhe was flying, all ſpirits and gaiety, when Leonora's eyes, full of tears, caught her's: Louiſa ſilently let go her companion's hands, and quitting the dance, ran up to Leonora to inquire what was the matter with her.

"Nothing," replied ſhe, "that need interrupt you—Go, my dear; go and dance again."

Louiſa immediately ran away to her garden, and pulling off her little ſtraw hat, ſhe lined it with the freſheſt ſtrawberry leaves; and was upon her knees before the ſtrawberry bed when Cecilia came by. Cecilia was not diſpoſed to

be pleaſed with Louiſa at that inſtant for two reaſons; becauſe ſhe was jealous of her, and becauſe ſhe had injured her. The injury, however, Louiſa had already forgotten: perhaps, to tell things juſt as they were, ſhe was not quite ſo much inclined to kiſs Cecilia as ſhe would have been before the fall of her mandarin, but this was the utmoſt extent of her malice, if it can be called malice.

"What are you doing there, little one?" ſaid Cecilia, in a ſharp tone: "Are you eating your early ſtrawberries here all alone?"

"No," ſaid Louiſa, myſteriouſly; "I am not eating them."

"What are you doing with them? can't you anſwer then—I'm not playing with you, child!"

"Oh! as to that, Cecilia, you know I need not anſwer you unleſs I chooſe it: not but what I would, if you would

only aſk me civilly—and if you would not call me *child*."

"Why ſhould not I call you child?"

"Becauſe—becauſe—I don't know: but I wiſh you would ſtand out of my light, Cecilia, for you are trampling upon all my ſtrawberries."

"I have not touched one, you covetous little creature!"

"Indeed—indeed, Cecilia, I am not covetous; I have not eaten one of them—they are all for your friend Leonora. See how unjuſt you are."

"Unjuſt! that's a cant word you have learned of my friend Leonora, as you call her; but ſhe is not my friend now."

"Not your friend now!" exclaimed Louiſa; "then I am ſure you muſt have done ſomething *very* naughty."

"How!" ſaid Cecilia, catching hold of her.

"Let me go—Let me go!" cried Louiſa, ſtruggling; "I wont give you one of my ſtrawberries, for I don't like you at all!"

"You don't, don't you?" ſaid Cecilia, provoked; and catching the hat from Louiſa, ſhe flung the ſtrawberries over the hedge.

"Will nobody help me!" exclaimed Louiſa, ſnatching her hat again, and running away with all her force.

"What have I done?" ſaid Cecilia, recollecting herſelf; "Louiſa! Louiſa!" She called very loud, but Louiſa would not turn back; ſhe was running to her companions.

They were ſtill dancing hand in hand upon the graſs, whilſt Leonora ſitting in the middle ſang to them.

"Stop! ſtop! and hear me!" cried Louiſa, breaking through them; and ruſhing up to Leonora, ſhe threw her

hat at her feet, and panting for breath—"It was full—almoſt full of my own ſtrawberries," ſaid ſhe; "the firſt I ever got out of my own garden.—They ſhould all have been for you, Leonora, but now I have not one left. They are all gone!" ſaid ſhe, and ſhe hid her face in Leonora's lap.

"Gone! gone where?" ſaid every one at once, running up to her.

"Cecilia! Cecilia!" ſaid ſhe, ſobbing.

"Cecilia," repeated Leonora, "what of Cecilia?"

"Yes, it was—it was."

"Come along with me," ſaid Leonora, unwilling to have her friend expoſed; "Come, and I will get you ſome more ſtrawberries."

"Oh, I don't mind the ſtrawberries indeed; but I wanted to have had the pleaſure of giving them to you."

Leonora took her up in her arms to carry her away; but it was too late.

"What, Cecilia! Cecilia, who won the prize!—it could not ſurely be Cecilia!" whiſpered every buſy tongue.

At this inſtant the bell ſummoned them in. "There ſhe is!—There ſhe is!" cried they, pointing to an arbor, where Cecilia was ſtanding aſhamed and alone: and as they paſſed her, ſome lifted up their hands and eyes with aſtoniſhment, others whiſpered and huddled myſteriouſly together, as if to avoid her: Leonora walked on, her head a little higher than uſual.

"Leonora!" ſaid Cecilia, timorouſly as ſhe paſſed.

"Oh, Cecilia! who would have thought that you had a bad heart?"

Cecilia turned her head aſide, and burſt into tears.

"Oh no, indeed, ſhe has not a bad heart!" cried Louiſa, running up to her, and throwing her arms round her neck: "She's very ſorry!—are not you, Cecilia?—But don't cry any more, for I forgive you with all my heart—and I love you now, though I ſaid I did not when I was in a paſſion."

"Oh, you ſweet-tempered-girl!—how I love you," ſaid Cecilia, kiſſing her.

"Well then if you do, come along with me, and dry your eyes, for they are ſo red!"

"Go, my dear, and I'll come preſently."

"Then I will keep a place for you next to me; but you muſt make haſte, or you will have to come in when we have all ſat down to ſupper, and then you will be ſo ſtared at!—So don't ſtay now."

Cecilia followed Louiſa with her eyes, till ſhe was out of ſight—"And is Louiſa," ſaid ſhe to herſelf, "the only one who would ſtop to pity me? Mrs. Villars told me that this day ſhould be mine; ſhe little thought how it would end!" Saying theſe words, Cecilia threw herſelf down upon the ground; her arm leaned upon a heap of turf which ſhe had raiſed in the morning, and which, in the pride and gaiety of her heart, ſhe had called her throne.

At this inſtant Mrs. Villars came out to enjoy the ſerenity of the evening, and paſſing by the arbor where Cecilia lay, ſhe ſtarted; Cecilia roſe haſtily.

"Who is there?" ſaid Mrs. Villars.

"It is I, madam."

"And who is *I*?

"Cecilia."

"Why, what keeps you here, my dear—where are your companions? this

is, perhaps, one of the happieſt days of your life."

"God forbid, madam!" ſaid Cecilia, hardly able to repreſs her tears.

"Why, my dear, what is the matter?"

Cecilia heſitated.

"Speak, my dear; you know that when I aſk you to tell me any thing as your friend, I never puniſh you as your governeſs: therefore you need not be afraid to tell me what is the matter."

"No, madam, I am not afraid, but aſhamed. You aſked me, why I was not with my companions?"

"Yes."

"Why, madam, becauſe they have all left me, and——"

"And what, my dear?"

"And I ſee that they all diſlike me: and yet I don't know why they ſhould, for I take as much pains to pleaſe as any of them; all my maſters ſeem ſatisfied

with me; and you yourſelf, ma'am, were pleaſed this very morning to give me this bracelet; and I am ſure you would not have given it to any one who did not deſerve it."

"Certainly not: you did deſerve it for your application—for your ſucceſsful application. The prize was for the moſt aſſiduous, not for the moſt amiable."

"Then if it had been for the moſt amiable it would not have been for me?"

Mrs. Villars, ſmiling.—"Why, what do you think yourſelf, Cecilia? you are better able to judge than I am: I can determine whether or no you apply to what I give you to learn; whether you attend to what I deſire you to do, and avoid what I deſire you not to do; I know that I like you as a pupil, but I cannot know that I ſhould like you as a

companion, unleſs I were your companion: therefore I muſt judge of what I ſhould do, by ſeeing what others do in the ſame circumſtances."

"Oh, pray don't ma'am! for then you would not love me neither.—And yet I think you would love me; for I hope that I am as ready to oblige, and as good-natured as—"

"Yes, Cecilia, I don't doubt but that you would be very good-natured to me, but I am afraid that I ſhould not like you, unleſs you were good-tempered too."

"But, ma'am, by good-natured I mean good-tempered—it's all the ſame thing."

"No, indeed, I underſtand by them two very different things: you are good-natured, Cecilia, for you are deſirous to oblige, and ſerve your companions; to gain them praiſe, and ſave them from blame; to give them pleaſure, and re-

lieve them from pain: but Leonora is good-tempered, for she can bear with their foibles, and acknowledge her own; without disputing about the right, she sometimes yields to those who are in the wrong; in short, her temper is perfectly good, for it can bear and forbear."

"I wish that mine could!" said Cecilia, sighing.

"It may," replied Mrs. Villars, "but it is not wishes alone, which can improve us in any thing: turn the same exertion and perseverance, which have won you the prize to-day, to this object, and you will meet with the same success; perhaps not on the first, the second, or the third attempt, but depend upon it that you will at last: every new effort will weaken your bad habits, and strengthen your good ones. But you must not expect to succeed all at once: I repeat it to you, for habit must be counteracted by habit. It would be

as extravagant in us to expect, that all our faults could be deſtroyed by one puniſhment, were it ever ſo ſevere, as it was in the Roman emperor we were reading of a few days ago, to wiſh that all the heads of his enemies were upon one neck, that he might cut them off at one blow."

Here Mrs. Villars took Cecilia by the hand, and they began to walk home. Such was the nature of Cecilia's mind, that when any object was forcibly impreſſed on her imagination, it cauſed a temporary ſuſpenſion of her reaſoning faculties. Hope was too ſtrong a ſtimulus for her ſpirits; and when fear did take poſſeſſion of her mind, it was attended with total debility: her vanity was now as much mortified, as in the morning it had been elated. She walked on with Mrs. Villars in ſilence, until they came under the ſhade of the elm-tree walk, and then, fixing her eyes

upon Mrs. Villars, she stopped short—"Do you think, madam," said she, with hesitation, "Do you think, madam, that I have a bad heart?"

"A bad heart, my dear! why what put that into your head?"

"Leonora said that I had, ma'am, and I felt ashamed when she said so."

"But, my dear, how can Leonora tell whether your heart be good or bad? However, in the first place, tell me what you mean by a bad heart."

"Indeed I do not know what is meant by it, ma'am; but it is something which every body hates."

"And why do they hate it?

"Because they think that it will hurt them, ma'am, I believe: and that those who have bad hearts, take delight in doing mischief; and that they never do any body any good but for their own ends."

—"Then the beſt definition which you can give me of a bad heart is, that it is ſome conſtant propenſity to hurt others, and to do wrong for the ſake of doing wrong."

"Yes, ma'am, but that is not all neither; there is ſtill ſomething elſe meant: ſomething which I cannot expreſs—which, indeed, I never diſtinctly underſtood; but of which, therefore, I was the more afraid."

"Well, then, to begin with what you do underſtand, tell me, Cecilia, do you really think it poſſible to be wicked merely for the love of wickedneſs? No human being becomes wicked all at once; a man begins by doing wrong becauſe it is, or becauſe he thinks it for his intereſt; if he continue to do ſo, he muſt conquer his ſenſe of ſhame, and loſe his love of virtue. But how can you, Cecilia, who feel ſuch a ſtrong ſenſe of ſhame, and ſuch an eager de-

fire to improve, imagine that you have a bad heart?"

"Indeed, madam, I never did, until every body told me so, and then I began to be frightened about it: this very evening, ma'am, when I was in a passion, I threw little Louisa's strawberries away; which, I am sure, I was very sorry for afterwards; and Leonora and every body cried out that I had a bad heart—but I am sure I was only in a passion."

"Very likely.—And when you are in a passion, as you call it, Cecilia, you see that you are tempted to do harm to others: if they do not feel angry themselves, they do not sympathise with you; they do not perceive the motive which actuates you, and then they say that you have a bad heart.—I dare say, however, when your passion is over, and when you recollect

yourſelf, you are very ſorry for what you have done and ſaid; are not you?"

"Yes, indeed, madam—very ſorry."

"Then make that ſorrow of uſe to you, Cecilia, and fix it ſteadily in your thoughts, as you hope to be good and happy, that if you ſuffer yourſelf to yield to your paſſion upon every trifling occaſion, anger and its conſequences will become familiar to your mind; and, in the ſame proportion, your ſenſe of ſhame will be weakened, till, what you began with doing from ſudden impulſe, you will end with doing from habit and choice: and then you would indeed, according to our definition, have a bad heart."

"Oh, madam! I hope—I am ſure I never ſhall."

"No, indeed, Cecilia; I do, indeed, believe that you never will; on the contrary, I think that you have a very good diſpoſition; and what is of infinitely more conſequence to you, an active

desire of improvement: shew me that you have as much perseverance as you have candour, and I shall not despair of your becoming every thing that I could wish."

Here Cecilia's countenance brightened, and she ran up the steps in almost as high spirits as she ran down them in the morning.

"Good night to you, Cecilia," said Mrs. Villars, as she was crossing the hall.

"Good night to you, madam," said Cecilia; and she ran up stairs to bed.

She could not go to sleep, but she lay awake reflecting upon the events of the preceeding day, and forming resolutions for the future; at the same time considering that she had resolved, and resolved without effect, she wished to give her mind some more powerful motive: ambition she knew to be its most powerful incentive.

"Have I not," said she to herself, "already won the prize of application, and cannot the same application procure me a much higher prize?—Mrs. Villars said, that if the prize had been promised to the most amiable, it would not have been given to me: perhaps it would not yesterday—perhaps it might not to-morrow; but that is no reason that I should despair of ever deserving it."

In consequence of this reasoning Cecilia formed a design of proposing to her companions, that they should give a prize, the first of the ensuing month (the first of June) to the most amiable. Mrs. Villars applauded the scheme, and her companions adopted it with the greatest alacrity.

"Let the prize," said they, "be a bracelet of our own hair;" and instantly their shining scissars were produced, and each contributed a lock of

their hair. They formed the most beautiful gradation of colours, from the palest auburn to the brightest black. Who was to have the honor of plaiting them was now the question.

Caroline begged that she might, as she could plait very neatly, she said.

Cecilia, however, was equally sure, that she could do it much better; and a dispute would inevitably have ensued, if Cecilia, recollecting herself just as her colour rose to scarlet, had not yielded—yielded, with no very good grace indeed, but as well as could be expected for the first time. For it is habit which confers ease; and without ease, even in moral actions, there can be no grace.

The bracelet was plaited in the neatest manner by Caroline, finished round the edge with silver twist, and on it was worked, in the smallest silver letters, this motto, TO THE MOST AMIABLE. The moment

it was completed, every body begged to try it on: it fastened with little silver clasps, and as it was made large enough for the eldest girls, it was too large for the youngest; of this they bitterly complained, and unanimously entreated that it might be cut to fit them.

"How foolish!" exclaimed Cecilia; "don't you perceive, that if any of you win it, you have nothing to do but to put the clasps a little further from the edge; but, if we get it, we can't make it larger."

"Very true," said they, "but you need not to have called us foolish, Cecilia!"

It was by such hasty and unguarded expressions as these, that Cecilia offended: a slight difference in the manner makes a very material one in the effect; Cecilia lost more love by general petulance, than she could gain by the greatest particular exertions.

How far ſhe ſucceeded in curing herſelf of this defect, how far ſhe became deſerving of the bracelet, and to whom the bracelet was given, ſhall be told in the Hiſtory of the Firſt of June.

How far the succeeded in curing her-
self of this deted, how far she became
delerving of the bracelet, and to whom
the bracelet was given, shall be told in
the History of the Fifth of June.

CONTINUATION.

THE BRACELETS.

THE first of June was now arrived, and all the young competitors were in a state of the most anxious suspense. Leonora and Cecilia continued to be the foremost candidates; their quarrel had never been finally adjusted, and their different pretensions now retarded all thoughts of a reconciliation. Cecilia, though she was capable of acknowledging any of her faults in public before all her companions, could not humble herself in private to Leonora: Leonora was her equal, they were her inferiors; and submission is much easier to a vain mind, where it appears to be vo-

luntary, than when it is the neceſſary tribute to juſtice or candour. So ſtrongly did Cecilia feel this truth, that ſhe even delayed making any apology, or coming to any explanation with Leonora, until ſucceſs ſhould once more give her the palm.

If I win the bracelet to-day, ſaid ſhe to herſelf, I will ſolicit the return of Leonora's friendſhip; it will be more valuable to me than even the bracelet; and at ſuch a time, and aſked in ſuch a manner, ſhe ſurely cannot refuſe it to me. Animated with this hope of a double triumph, Cecilia canvaſſed with the moſt zealous activity: by conſtant attention and exertion ſhe had conſiderably abated the violence of her temper, and changed the courſe of her habits. Her powers of pleaſing were now excited, inſtead of her abilities to excel; and, if her talents appeared leſs brilliant, her character was acknowledged to be more

amiable; so great an influence upon our manners and conduct have the objects of our ambition.—Cecilia was now, if possible, more than ever desirous of doing what was right, but she had not yet acquired sufficient fear of doing wrong. This was the fundamental error of her mind: it arose in a great measure from her early education.

Her mother died when she was very young; and though her father had supplied her place in the best and kindest manner, he had insensibly infused into his daughter's mind a portion of that enterprizing, independent spirit, which he justly deemed essential to the character of her brother: this brother was some years older than Cecilia, but he had always been the favourite companion of her youth: what her father's precepts inculcated, his example enforced, and even Cecilia's virtues consequently

became such as were more estimable in a man, than desirable in a female.

All small objects, and small errors, she had been taught to disregard as trifles; and her impatient disposition was perpetually leading her into more material faults; yet her candour in confessing these, she had been suffered to believe, was sufficient reparation and atonement.

Leonora, on the contrary, who had been educated by her mother in a manner more suited to her sex, had a character and virtues more peculiar to a female: her judgment had been early cultivated, and her good sense employed in the regulation of her conduct; she had been habituated to that restraint, which, as a woman, she was to expect in life, and early accustomed to yield; compliance in her seemed natural and graceful.

Yet, notwithſtanding the gentleneſs of her temper, ſhe was in reality more independent than Cecilia; ſhe had more reliance upon her own judgment, and more ſatisfaction in her own approbation: though far from inſenſible to praiſe, ſhe was not liable to be miſled by the indiſcriminate love of admiration: the uniform kindneſs of her manner, the conſiſtency and equality of her character, had fixed the eſteem and paſſive love of her companions.

By paſſive love we mean that ſpecies of affection, which makes us unwilling to offend, rather than anxious to oblige; which is more a habit than an emotion of the mind. For Cecilia her companions felt active love, for ſhe was active in ſhewing her love to them.

Active love ariſes ſpontaneouſly in the mind, after feeling particular inſtances of kindneſs, without reflection on the paſt conduct or general character; it ex-

ceeds the merits of its object, and is connected with a feeling of generosity, rather than with a sense of justice.

Without determining which species of love is the most flattering to others, we can easily decide which is the most agreeable feeling to our own minds; we give our hearts more credit for being generous than for being just; and we feel more self-complacency when we give our love voluntarily, than when we yield it as a tribute which we cannot withhold. Though Cecilia's companions might not know all this in theory, they proved it in practice; for they loved her in a much higher proportion to her merits, than they loved Leonora.

Each of the young judges were to signify their choice, by putting a red or a white shell into a vase prepared for the purpose. Cecilia's colour was red, Leonora's white. In the morning nothing was to be seen but these shells,

nothing talked of but the long expected event of the evening. Cecilia, following Leonora's example, had made it a point of honour not to enquire of any individual her vote, previously to their final determination.

They were both sitting together in Louisa's room; Louisa was recovering from the measles: every one, during her illness, had been desirous of attending her; but Leonora and Cecilia were the only two that were permitted to see her, as they alone had had the distemper. They were both assiduous in their care of Louisa; but Leonora's want of exertion to overcome any disagreeable feelings of sensibility, often deprived her of presence of mind, and prevented her from being so constantly useful as Cecilia. Cecilia, on the contrary, often made too much noise and bustle with her officious assistance, and was too anxious to invent amusements, and pro-

cure comforts for Louiſa, without perceiving, that illneſs takes away the power of enjoying them.

As ſhe was ſitting in the window in the morning, exerting herſelf to entertain Louiſa, ſhe heard the voice of an old pedlar, who often uſed to come to the houſe. Down ſtairs ſhe ran immediately to aſk Mrs. Villars's permiſſion to bring him into the hall.

Mrs. Villars conſented, and away Cecilia ran to proclaim the news to her companions; then firſt returning into the hall, ſhe found the pedlar juſt unbuckling his box, and taking it off his ſhoulders. "What would you be pleaſed to want, miſs," ſaid he, "I've all kinds of tweezer-caſes, rings, and lockets of all ſorts," continued he, opening all the glittering drawers ſucceſſively.

"Oh!" ſaid Cecilia, ſhutting the drawer of lockets which tempted her moſt, "theſe are not the things which

I want; have you any china figures, any mandarins?"

"Alack-a-day, miſs, I had a great ſtock of that ſame china ware, but now I'm quite out of them kind of things; but I believe," ſaid he, rummaging in one of the deepeſt drawers, "I believe I have one left, and here it is."

"Oh that is the very thing! what's its price?"

"Only three ſhillings, ma'am."—Cecilia paid the money, and was juſt going to carry off the mandarin, when the pedlar took out of his great coat pocket a neat mahogany caſe: it was about a foot long, and faſtened at each end by two little claſps; it had, beſides, a ſmall lock in the middle.

"What is that?" ſaid Cecilia, eagerly.

"It's only a china figure, miſs, which a m going to carry to an elderly lady,

who lives nigh hand, and who is mighty fond of ſuch things."

"Could you let me look at it?"

"And welcome, miſs," ſaid he, and opened the caſe.

"Oh goodneſs! how beautiful!" exclaimed Cecilia.

It was a figure of Flora, crowned with roſes, and carrying a baſket of flowers in her hand. Cecilia contemplated it with delight. "How I ſhould like to give this to Louiſa," ſaid ſhe to herſelf; and at laſt, breaking ſilence, "did you promiſe it to the old lady?"

"Oh no, miſs; I did'nt promiſe it, ſhe never ſaw it; and if ſo be that you'd like to take it, I'd make no more words about it."

"And how much does it coſt?"

"Why, miſs, as to that, I'll let you have it for half-a-guinea."

Cecilia immediately produced the box in which ſhe kept her treaſure, and,

emptying it upon the table, she began to count the shillings: alas! there were but six shillings. "How provoking!" said she, "then I can't have it—where's the mandarin? Oh I have it," said she, taking it up, and looking at it with the utmost disgust; "is this the same that I had before?"

"Yes, miss, the very same," replied the pedlar, who, during this time, had been examining the little box, out of which Cecilia had taken her money: it was of silver."

"Why, ma'am, said he, "since you've taken such a fancy to the piece, if you've a mind to make up the remainder of the money, I will take this here little box, if you care to part with it."

Now this box was a keep-sake from Leonora to Cecilia. "No," said Cecilia hastily, blushing a little, and stretching out her hand to receive it.

"Oh, miſs!" ſaid he, returning it careleſsly, "I hope there's no offence; I meant but to ſerve you, that's all; ſuch a rare piece of china-work has no cauſe to go a begging;" adding he, putting the Flora deliberately into the caſe, then turning the key with a jerk he let it drop into his pocket, and lifting up his box by the leather ſtraps, he was preparing to depart.

"Oh, ſtay one minute!" ſaid Cecilia, in whoſe mind there had paſſed a very warm conflict during the pedlar's harangue. "Louiſa would ſo like this Flora," ſaid ſhe, arguing with herſelf; "beſides, it would be ſo generous in me to give it to her, inſtead of that ugly mandarin; that would be doing only common juſtice, for I promiſed it to her, and ſhe expects it. Though, when I come to look at this mandarin, it is not even ſo good as her's was: the

gilding is all rubbed off, so that I absolutely must buy this for her. Oh yes, I will, and she will be so delighted! and then every body will say it is the prettiest thing they ever saw, and the broken mandarin will be forgotten for ever!"

Here Cecilia's hand moved, and she was just going to decide: "Oh! but stop," said she to herself, "consider, Leonora gave me this box, and it is a keepsake; however, now we have quarrelled, and I dare say that she would not mind my parting with it: I'm sure that I should not care, if she was to give away my keepsake the smelling bottle, or the ring, which I gave her; so what does it signify; besides, is it not my own, and have I not a right to do what I please with it?"

At this dangerous instant for Cecilia, a party of her companions opened the door; she knew that they came as pur-

chaſers, and ſhe dreaded her Flora's becoming the prize of ſome higher bidder. "Here," ſaid ſhe, haſtily putting the box into the pedlar's hand, without looking at it; "take it, and give me the Flora." Her hand trembled, though ſhe ſnatched it impatiently; ſhe ran by, without ſeeming to mind any of her companions—ſhe almoſt wiſhed to turn back.

Let thoſe who are tempted to do wrong by the hopes of future gratification, or the proſpect of certain concealment and impunity, remember, that unleſs they are totally depraved, they bear in their own hearts a monitor, who will prevent their enjoying what they have ill obtained.

In vain Cecilia ran to the reſt of her companions, to diſplay her preſent, in hopes that the applauſe of others would reſtore her own ſelf-complacency; in vain ſhe ſaw the Flora paſs in due pomp

from hand to hand, each vying with the other in extolling the beauty of the gift, and the generosity of the giver. Cecilia was still displeased with herself, with them, and even with their praise; from Louisa's gratitude, however, she yet expected much pleasure, and immediately she ran up stairs to her room.

In the mean time Leonora had gone into the hall to buy a bodkin; she had just broken her's. In giving her change, the pedlar took out of his pocket, with some halfpence, the very box which Cecilia had sold to him. Leonora did not in the least suspect the truth, for her mind was above suspicion; and, besides, she had the utmost confidence in Cecilia. "I should like to have that box," said she, "for it is like one of which I was very fond."

The pedlar named the price, and Leonora took the box: she intended to give it to little Louisa.

On going to her room she found her asleep, and she sat down softly by her bed-side. Louisa opened her eyes.

"I hope I didn't disturb you," said Leonora.

"Oh no; I didn't hear you come in; but what have you got there?"

"It is only a little box; would you like to have it? I bought it on purpose for you, as I thought perhaps it would please you; because it's like that which I gave Cecilia."

"Oh yes! that out of which she used to give me Barbary drops: I am very much obliged to you; I always thought *that* exceedingly pretty, and this, indeed, is as like it as possible. I can't unscrew it; will you try?"

Leonora unscrewed it.

"Goodness!" exclaimed Louisa, "this must be Cecilia's box; look, don't you see a great L at the bottom of it?"

Leonora's colour changed; "yes," ſhe replied calmly, "I ſee that, but it is no proof that it is Cecilia's; you know that I bought this box juſt now of the pedlar."

"That may be," ſaid Louiſa; "but I remember ſcratching that L with my own needle, and Cecilia ſcolded me for it too: do go and aſk her if ſhe has loſt her box—do," repeated Louiſa, pulling her by the ruffle, as ſhe did not ſeem to liſten.

Leonora indeed did not hear, for ſhe was loſt in thought; ſhe was comparing circumſtances, which had before eſcaped her attention: ſhe recollected, that Cecilia had paſſed her, as ſhe came into the hall, without ſeeming to ſee her, but had bluſhed as ſhe paſſed. She remembered, that the pedlar appeared unwilling to part with the box, and was going to put it again into his pocket

with the halfpence: "and why ſhould he keep it in his pocket, and not ſhew it with his other things?"—Combining all theſe circumſtances, Leonora had no longer any doubt of the truth; for though ſhe had honourable confidence in her friends, ſhe had too much penetration to be implicitly credulous.—"Louiſa;" ſhe began, but at this inſtant ſhe heard a ſtep, which, by its quickneſs, ſhe knew to be Cecilia's, coming along the paſſage.—"If you love me, Louiſa," ſaid Leonora, "ſay nothing about the box."

"Nay, but why not? I dare ſay ſhe has loſt it."

"No, my dear, I'm afraid ſhe has not." Louiſa looked ſurpriſed.

"But I have reaſons for deſiring you not to ſay any thing about it."

"Well then, I won't, indeed."

Cecilia opened the door, came forward ſmiling, as if ſecure of a good re-

ception, and, taking the Flora out of the caſe, ſhe placed it on the mantle-piece, oppoſite to Louiſa's bed. "Dear, how beautiful," cried Louiſa, ſtarting up.

"Yes," ſaid Cecilia, "and gueſs who it's for?"

"For me, perhaps!" ſaid the ingenuous Louiſa.

"Yes, take it, and keep it for my ſake: you know that I broke your mandarin."

"Oh! but this is a great deal prettier, and larger than that."

"Yes, I know it is; and I meant that it ſhould be ſo; I ſhould only have done what I was bound to do, if I had only given you a mandarin."

"Well, and that would have been enough, ſurely: but what a beautiful crown of roſes! and then that baſket of flowers! they almoſt look as if I

could ſmell them :—dear Cecilia! I'm very much obliged to you, but I won't take it by way of payment for the mandarin you broke; for I'm ſure you could not help that; and, beſides, I ſhould have broken it myſelf by this time. You ſhall give it to me entirely, and I'll keep it as long as I live as your keepſake."

Louiſa ſtopped ſhort and coloured. The word keepſake recalled the box to her mind, and all the train of ideas which the Flora had baniſhed.—"But," ſaid ſhe, looking up wiſhfully in Cecilia's face, and holding the Flora doubtfully, "did you—"

Leonora, who was juſt quitting the room, turned her head back, and gave Louiſa a look, which ſilenced her.

Cecilia was ſo infatuated with her vanity, that ſhe neither perceived Leonora's ſign, nor Louiſa's confuſion, but continued ſhewing off her preſent, by

placing it in various situations, till at length she put it into the cate, and laying it down with an affected careleſsneſs upon the bed, "I muſt go now, Louiſa. Good bye," ſaid ſhe, running up, and kiſſing her; "but I'll come again preſently"—then clapping the door after her, ſhe went.

But, as ſoon as the fermentation of her ſpirits ſubſided, the ſenſe of ſhame, which had been ſcarcely felt when mixed with ſo many other ſenſations, roſe uppermoſt in her mind. "What!" ſaid ſhe to herſelf, "is it poſſible that I have ſold what I promiſed to keep for ever? and what Leonora gave me? and I have concealed it too, and have been making a parade of my generoſity. Oh! what would Leonora, what would Louiſa, what would every body think of me, if the truth were known?"

Humiliated and grieved by theſe reflections, Cecilia began to ſearch in

her own mind for ſome conſoling idea. She began to compare her conduct with the conduct of others of her own age; and at length, fixing her compariſon upon her brother George, as the companion of whom, from her infancy, ſhe had been habitually the moſt emulous, ſhe recollected, that an almoſt ſimilar circumſtance had once happened to him, and that he had not only eſcaped diſgrace, but had acquired glory by an intrepid confeſſion of his fault. Her father's words to her brother, on the occaſion, ſhe alſo perfectly recollected.

"Come to me, George," he ſaid holding out his hand, "you are a generous, brave boy: they who dare to confeſs their faults will make great and good men."

Theſe were his words; but Cecilia, in repeating them to herſelf, forgot to lay that emphaſis on the word *men*, which would have placed it in contra-

distinction to the word women. She willingly believed, that the observation extended equally to both sexes, and flattered herself, that she should exceed her brother in merit, if she owned a fault, which she thought that it would be so much more difficult to confess. "Yes, but," said she, stopping herself, "how can I confess it? This very evening, in a few hours, the prize will be decided; Leonora or I shall win it: I have now as good a chance as Leonora, perhaps a better; and must I give up all my hopes? all that I have been labouring for this month past! Oh I never can;—if it were but to-morrow, or yesterday, or any day but this, I would not hesitate, but now I am almost certain of the prize, and if I win it—well, why then I will—I think, I will tell all—yes I will; I am determined," said Cecilia.

Here a bell ſummoned them to dinner; Leonora ſat oppoſite to her, and ſhe was not a little ſurpriſed, to ſee Cecilia look ſo gay and unconſtrained. "Surely," ſaid ſhe to herſelf, "if Cecilia had done this, that I ſuſpect, ſhe would not, ſhe could not look as ſhe does." But Leonora little knew the cauſe of her gaiety; Cecilia was never in higher ſpirits, or better pleaſed with herſelf, than when ſhe had reſolved upon a ſacrifice or a confeſſion.

"Muſt not this evening be given to the moſt amiable? Whoſe then will it be?" All eyes glanced firſt at Cecilia, and then at Leonora. Cecilia ſmiled; Leonora bluſhed. "I ſee that it is not yet decided," ſaid Mrs. Villars; and immediately they ran up ſtairs, amidſt confuſed whiſperings.

Cecilia's voice could be diſtinguiſhed far above the reſt. "How can ſhe be-

ſo happy," ſaid Leonora to herſelf; "Oh Cecilia, there was a time, when you could not have neglected me ſo!—when we were always together, the beſt of friends and companions; our wiſhes, taſtes, and pleaſures the ſame! Surely ſhe did once love me," ſaid Leonora; "but now ſhe is quite changed, ſhe has even ſold my keepſake; and ſhe would rather win a bracelet of hair from girls whom—ſhe did not always think ſo much ſuperior to Leonora, than have my eſteem, my confidence, and my friendſhip, for her whole life: yes, for her whole life, for I am ſure ſhe will be an amiable woman: oh! that this bracelet had never been thought of, or, that I were certain of her winning it; for I am ſure that I do not wiſh to win it from her: I would rather, a thouſand times rather, that we were as we uſed to be, than have all the glory in the world: and how pleaſing Cecilia can be,

when ſhe wiſhes to pleaſe!---how candid ſhe is!---how much ſhe can improve herſelf!---let me be juſt, though ſhe has offended me:---ſhe is wonderfully improved within this laſt month: for one fault, and *that* againſt myſelf, ſhould I forget all her merits?"

As Leonora ſaid theſe laſt words, ſhe could but juſt hear the voices of her companions; they had left her alone in the gallery---ſhe knocked ſoftly at Louiſa's door---"Come in," ſaid Louiſa, "I'm not aſleep; oh," ſaid ſhe, ſtarting up with the Flora in her hand, the inſtant that the door was opened; "I'm ſo glad you are come, Leonora, for I did ſo long to hear what you were all making ſuch a noiſe about---have you forgot that the bracelet——"

"O yes! is this the evening?"

"Well, here's my white ſhell for you, I've kept it in my pocket this fortnight; and though Cecilia did give

me this Flora, I ſtill love you a great deal better."

"I thank you, Louiſa," ſaid Leonora, gratefully, "I will take your ſhell, and I ſhall value it as long as I live; but here is a red one, and if you wiſh to ſhew me that you love me, you will give this to Cecilia; I know that ſhe is particularly anxious for your preference, and I am ſure that ſhe deſerves it."

"Yes, if I could I would chooſe both of you—but you know I can only chooſe which I like the beſt."

"If you mean, my dear Louiſa" ſaid Leonora, "that you like me the beſt, I am very much obliged to you; for, indeed, I wiſh you to love me; but it is enough for me to know it in private; I ſhould not feel the leaſt more pleaſure at hearing it in public, or in having it made known to all my companions, eſpecially at a time when it

would give poor Cecilia a great deal of pain."

"But why should it give her pain; I don't like her for being jealous of you."

"Nay, Louisa, surely you don't think Cecilia jealous; she only tries to excel, and to please; she is more anxious to succeed than I am, it is true, because she has a great deal more activity, and perhaps more ambition; and it would really mortify her to lose this prize, you know that she proposed it herself, it has been her object for this month past, and I am sure she has taken great pains to obtain it."

"But, dear Leonora, why should you lose it?"

"Indeed, my dear, it would be no loss to me; and, if it were, I would willingly suffer it for Cecilia; for, though we seem not to be such good friends as we used to be, I love her very

much, and ſhe will love me again; I'm ſure ſhe will; when ſhe no longer fears me as a rival, ſhe will again love me as a friend."

Here Leonora heard a number of her companions running along the gallery. They all knocked haſtily at the door, calling "Leonora! Leonora! will you never come? Cecilia has been with us this half hour."

Leonora ſmiled, "Well, Louiſa," ſaid ſhe, ſmiling, "Will you promiſe me?"

"Oh, I'm ſure, by the way they ſpeak to you, that they won't give you the prize!" ſaid the little Louiſa; and the tears ſtarted into her eyes.

"They love me, though for all that; and as for the prize, you know whom I wiſh to have it."

"Leonora! Leonora!" called her impatient companions; "don't you hear us? What are you about?"

"Oh she never will take any trouble about any thing," said one of the party, "let's go away!"

"Oh go! go! make haste," cried Louisa; "don't stay, they are so angry, I will, I will, indeed!"

"Remember, then, that you have promised me," said Leonora, and she left the room. During all this time Cecilia had been in the garden with her companions. The ambition which she had felt to win the first prize, the prize of superior talents, and superior application, was not to be compared to the absolute anxiety, which she now expressed, to win this simple testimony of the love and approbation of her equals and rivals.

To employ her exuberant activity, she had been dragging branches of lilacs and laburnums, roses, and sweet briar, to ornament the bower in which her fate was to be decided. It was excef-

ſively hot, but her mind was engaged, and ſhe was indefatigable. She ſtood ſtill, at laſt, to admire her works; her companions all joined in loud applauſe; they were not a little prejudiced in her favour, by the great eagerneſs which ſhe expreſſed to win their prize, and by the great importance which ſhe ſeemed to affix to the preference of each individual. At laſt, "where is Leonora?" cried one of them, and immediately, as we have ſeen, they ran to call her.

Cecilia was left alone; overcome with heat, and too violent exertion, ſhe had hardly ſtrength to ſupport herſelf; each moment appeared to her intolerably long: ſhe was in a ſtate of the utmoſt ſuſpenſe, and all her courage failed her, even hope forſook her, and hope is a cordial which leaves the mind depreſſed and enfeebled. "The time is now

come," ſaid Cecilia, " in a few moments all will be decided.---In a few moments! goodneſs! how much do I hazard! If I ſhould not win the prize, how ſhall I confeſs what I have done? How ſhall I beg Leonora to forgive me? I who hoped to reſtore my friendſhip to her as an honour!—they are gone to ſee for her—the moment ſhe appears I ſhall be forgotten—what ſhall—what ſhall I do!" ſaid Cecilia, covering her face with her hands.

Such was her ſituation, when Leonora, accompanied by her companions, opened the hall-door; they moſt of them ran forwards to Cecilia. As Leonora came into the bower, ſhe held out her hand to Cecilia---" we are not rivals, but friends, I hope," ſaid ſhe; Cecilia claſped her hand, but ſhe was in too great agitation to ſpeak.

" The table was now ſet in the arbour; —The vaſe was now placed in the mid-

dle. "Well!" ſaid Cecilia, eagerly, "who begins?" Caroline, one of her friends, came forwards firſt, and then all the others ſucceſſively.—Cecilia's emotion was hardly conceivable. "Now they are all in!—count them, Caroline!"

One, two, three, four; the numbers are both equal."

There was a dead ſilence.

"No, they are not," exclaimed Cecilia, preſſing forward and putting a ſhell into the vaſe—"I have not given mine, and I give it to Leonora." Then ſnatching the bracelet, "it is your's, Leonora," ſaid ſhe, "take it, and give me back your friendſhip." The whole aſſembly gave an univerſal clap, and ſhout of applauſe.

"I cannot be ſurpriſed at this from you, Cecilia," ſaid Leonora; "and do you then ſtill love me as you uſed to do?"

"Oh Leonora! ſtop! don't praiſe me; I don't deſerve this," ſaid ſhe, turning to her loudly applauding companions; "you will ſoon deſpiſe me—oh, Leonora, you will never forgive me!—I have deceived you—I have ſold——"

At this inſtant Mrs. Villars appeared—the crowd divided—ſhe had heard all that paſſed from her window.

"I applaud your generoſity, Cecilia," ſaid ſhe, "but I am to tell you, that in this inſtance it is unſucceſsful: you have it not in your power to give the prize to Leonora---it is your's---I have another vote to give you---you have forgotten Louiſa."

"Louiſa! but ſurely, ma'am, Louiſa loves Leonora better than ſhe does me?"

"She commiſſioned me, however," ſaid Mrs. Villars, "to give you a red ſhell; and you will find it in this box."

Cecilia ſtarted, and turned as pale as death—it was the fatal box.

Mrs. Villars produced another box—ſhe opened it—it contained the Flora;—"and Louiſa alſo deſired me," ſaid ſhe, "to return you this Flora"—ſhe put it into Cecilia's hand—Cecilia trembled ſo that ſhe could not hold it; Leonora caught it.

"Oh madam! oh Leonora!" exclaimed Cecilia; "now I have no hope left: I intended, I was juſt going to tell——"

"Dear Cecilia," ſaid Leonora, "you need not tell it me, I know it already, and I forgive you with all my heart."

"Yes, I can prove to you," ſaid Mrs. Villars, "that Leonora has forgiven you: it is ſhe who has given you the prize; it was ſhe who perſuaded Louiſa to give you her vote. I went to ſee her a little while ago, and perceiving, by her coun-

tenance, that ſomething was the matter, I preſſed her to tell me what it was.

" Why, madam,' ſaid ſhe, ' Leonora has made me promiſe to give my ſhell to Cecilia; now I don't love Cecilia half ſo well as I do Leonora; beſides, I would not have Cecilia think I vote for her becauſe ſhe gave me a Flora.' Whilſt Louiſa was ſpeaking," continued Mrs. Villars, " I ſaw this ſilver box lying on the bed; I took it up, and aſked, if it was not yours, and how ſhe came by it.

" Indeed, madam,' ſaid Louiſa, ' I could have been almoſt certain that it was Cecilia's; but Leonora gave it me, and ſhe ſaid that ſhe bought it of the pedlar this morning; if any body elſe had told me ſo, I could not have believed them, becauſe I remembered the box ſo well; but I can't help believing Leonora.'

" But did not you aſk Cecilia about it?' ſaid I."

"No, madam,' replied Louiſa, 'for Leonora forbad me.'

"I gueſſed her reaſon. 'Well,' ſaid I, 'give me the box, and I will carry your ſhell in it to Cecilia.'

"Then, madam,' ſaid ſhe, 'if I muſt give it her, pray do take the Flora, and return it to her firſt, that ſhe may not think it is for that I do it."

"Oh generous!" Leonora, exclaimed Cecilia; "but indeed, Louiſa, I cannot take your ſhell."

"Then, dear Cecilia, accept of mine inſtead of it; you cannot refuſe it, I only follow your example: as for the bracelet," added Leonora, taking Cecilia's hand, "I aſſure you I don't wiſh for it; and you do, and you deſerve it."

"No," ſaid Cecilia, "indeed I do not deſerve it; next to you ſurely Louiſa deſerves it beſt."

"Louiſa! oh yes, Louiſa," exclaimed every body with one voice.

"Yes," ſaid Mrs. Villars, "and let Cecilia carry the Bracelet to her; ſhe deſerves that reward. For one fault I cannot forget all your merits, Cecilia; nor, I am ſure, will your companions."

"Then, ſurely, not your beſt friend," ſaid Leonora, kiſſing her.

Every body preſent was moved—they looked up to Leonora with reſpectful and affectionate admiration.

"Oh, Leonora, how I love you! and how I wiſh to be like you!" exclaimed Cecilia, "to be as good, as generous!"

"Rather wiſh, Cecilia," interrupted Mrs. Villars, "to be as juſt; to be as ſtrictly honourable, and as invariably conſiſtent."

"Remember, that many of our ſex are capable of great efforts, of making, what they call great ſacrifices to vir-

tue, or to friendſhip; but few treat their friends with habitual gentleneſs, or uniformly conduct themſelves with prudence and good ſenſe."

C.E. del. Nagle. sculp.

Come Signor fill me quick — one measure for myself & one for my little Rosetta.

THE LITTLE MERCHANTS.

CHAPTER I.

Chi di gallina naſce convien che rozole.
As the old cock crows, ſo crows the young.

THOSE who have viſited Italy, give us an agreeable picture of the chearful induſtry of the children of all ages in the celebrated city of Naples: their manner of living, and their numerous employments, are exactly deſcribed in the following "Extract from a Traveller's Journal." *

"The children are buſied in various "ways. A great number of them bring

* Varieties of Literature, vol. 1. page 299.

" fiſh for ſale to town from Santa Lucia ;
" others are very often ſeen about the
" arſenals, or wherever carpenters are at
" work, employed in gathering up the
" chips and pieces of wood, or by the
" ſea-ſide picking up ſticks, and what-
" ever elſe has drifted aſhore; which,
" when their baſket is full, they carry
" away. Children of two or three years
" old, who can ſcarcely crawl along upon
" the ground, in company with boys of
" five or ſix, are employed in this petty
" trade. Hence they proceed with
" their baſkets into the heart of the city,
" where in ſeveral places they form a
" ſort of little market, ſitting round
" with their ſtock of wood before them.
" Labourers, and the lower order of
" citizens buy it of them, to burn in
" the tripods for warming themſelves,
" or to uſe in their ſcanty kitchens.
" Other children carry about for ſale the
" water of the ſulphureous wells, which

" particularly in the ſpring ſeaſon, is
" drunk in great abundance. Others
" again endeavour to turn a few pence
" by buying a ſmall matter of fruit, of
" preſſed honey, cakes, and comfits, and
" then, like little pedlars, offer and ſell
" them to other children, always for no
" more profit than that they may have
" their ſhare of them free of expenſe.
" It is really curious to ſee how an urchin,
" whoſe whole ſtock and property con-
" ſiſt in a board and a knife, will carry
" about a water melon, or a half roaſted
" gourd, collect a troop of children
" round him, ſet down his board, and
" proceed to divide the fruit into ſmall
" pieces among them. The buyers keep
" a ſharp look out, to ſee that they have
" enough for their little piece of copper;
" and the liliputian tradeſman acts with
" no leſs caution, as the exigencies of the
" caſe may require, to prevent his being
" cheated out of a morſel."

The advantages of truth and honeſty, and the value of a character for integrity, are very early felt amongſt theſe little merchants in their daily intercourſe with each other. The fair dealer is always ſooner or later ſeen to proſper, the moſt cunning cheat is at laſt detected and diſgraced.

Numerous inſtances of the truth of this common obſervation were remarked by many Neapolitan children, eſpecially by thoſe who were acquainted with the characters and hiſtory of Piedro and Franciſco, two boys originally equal in birth, fortune and capacity, but different in their education, and conſequently in their habits and conduct. Franciſco was the ſon of an honeſt gardener, who, from the time he could ſpeak, taught him to love to ſpeak the truth, ſhewed him that liars are never believed—that cheats and thieves cannot be truſted, and that the ſhorteſt way

to obtain a good character is to deſerve it.—Youth and white paper, as the proverb ſays, take all impreſſions. The boy profited much by his father's precepts, and more by his example; he always heard his father ſpeak the truth, and ſaw that he dealt fairly with every body. In all his childiſh traffick, Franciſco, imitating his parents, was ſcrupulouſly honeſt, and therefore all his companions truſted him—"As honeſt as Franciſco," became a ſort of proverb amongſt them.

"As honeſt as Franciſco,"—repeated Piedro's father, when he one day heard this ſaying; "let them ſay ſo: I ſay, as ſharp as Piedro, and let us ſee which will go through the world beſt." With the idea of making his ſon *ſharp*, he made him cunning; he taught him, that to make a *good bargain* was to deceive as to the value and price of whatever he wanted to diſpoſe of, to get as much

money as possible from customers by taking advantage of their ignorance, or of their confidence; he often repeated his favourite proverb—"The buyer has need of a hundred eyes; the seller has need but of one *." And he took frequent opportunities of explaining the meaning of this maxim to his son. He was a fisherman, and as his gains depended more upon fortune than upon prudence, he trusted habitually to his good luck. After being idle for a whole day, he would cast his line or his nets, and if he was lucky enough to catch a fine fish, he would go and shew it in triumph to his neighbour the gardener—"You are obliged to work all day long for your daily bread," he would say, "look here, I work but five minutes, and I have not only daily bread, but daily

* Chi compra ha bisogna di cent occhi, chi vende n'ha assai di uno.

fish." Upon these occasions our fisherman always forgot or neglected to count the hours and days, which were wasted in waiting for a fair wind to put to sea, or angling in vain on the shore. Little Piedro, who used to bask in the sun upon the sea shore beside his father, and to lounge or sleep away his time in a fishing boat, acquired habits of idleness, which seemed to his father of little consequence whilst he was *but a child.* "What will you do with Piedro as he grows up, neighbour," said the gardener, "he is smart and quick enough, but he is always in mischief. Scarcely a day has passed for this fortnight, but I have caught him amongst my grapes.—I track his foot-steps all over my vineyard." "*He is but a child* yet, and knows no better," replied the fisherman. "But if you don't teach him better now he is a child, how will he know better when he is a man?" said the gardener.—"A

mighty noiſe about a bunch of grapes, truly!" cried the fiſherman—"a few grapes, more or leſs in your vineyard, what does it ſignify?"—"I ſpeak for your ſon's ſake, and not for the ſake of my grapes," ſaid the gardener—"and I tell you again, the boy will not do well in the world, neighbour, if you don't look after him in time." "He'll do well enough in the world, you will find," anſwered the fiſherman, careleſsly—"whenever he caſts my nets they never come up empty.—It is better to be lucky than wiſe*." This was a proverb which Piedro had frequently heard from his father, and to which he moſt willingly truſted, becauſe it gave him leſs trouble to fancy himſelf fortunate, than to make himſelf wiſe. "Come here, child," ſaid his father to him, when he returned home after the preceding con-

* E' meglio eſſer fortunato que ſavia.

verſation with the gardener; "how old are you, my boy, twelve years old? is not it?" "As old as Franciſco, and older by ſix months," ſaid Piedro. "And ſmarter and more knowing by ſix years," ſaid his father. "Here, take theſe fiſh to Naples, and let us ſee how you'll ſell them for me. Venture a ſmall fiſh, as the proverb ſays, to catch a great one *. I was too late with them at the market yeſterday, but nobody will know but what they are juſt freſh out of the water, unleſs you go and tell them."—"Not I, truſt me for that, I'm not ſuch a fool," replied Piedro, laughing—"I leave that to Franciſco.—Do you know I ſaw him the other day miſs ſelling a melon for his father by turning the bruiſed ſide to the cuſtomer, who was juſt laying down the money for it, and who was a raw ſervant boy moreover;

* Butta una ſardella per pigliar un luccio.

one who would never have gueſſed there were two ſides to a melon, if he had not, as you ſay father, been told it." "Off with you to market; you are a droll chap," ſaid his father, "and will ſell my fiſh cleverly, I'll be bound; as to the reſt, let every man take care of his own grapes—you underſtand me, Piedro?" "Perfectly," ſaid the boy, who perceived that his father was indifferent, as to his honeſty, provided he ſold fiſh at the higheſt price poſſible. He proceeded to the market, and he offered his fiſh with aſſiduity to every perſon, whom he thought likely to buy it, eſpecially to thoſe upon whom he thought he could impoſe. He poſitively aſſerted to all who looked at his fiſh, that they were juſt freſh out of the water; good judges of men and fiſh knew that he ſaid what was falſe, and paſſed him by with neglect; but it was at laſt what he called his *good luck* to

meet with the very ſame young raw ſervant boy, who would have bought the bruiſed melon from Franciſco. He made up to him directly, crying—"Fiſh!—Fine freſh fiſh! freſh fiſh." "Was it caught to day?" ſaid the boy——"Yes, this morning; not an hour ago;" ſaid Piedro, with the greateſt effrontery. The ſervant boy was impoſed upon, and being a foreigner, ſpeaking the Italian language but imperfectly, and not being expert at reckoning the Italian money, he was no match for the cunning Piedro, who cheated him not only as to the freſhneſs, but as to the price of the commodity. Piedro received nearly half as much again for his fiſh, as he ought to have done.

On his road homewards from Naples to the little village of Reſina, where his father lived, he overtook Franciſco, who was leading his father's aſs; the aſs was laden with large panniers, which were

filled with the ſtalks and leaves of cauliflowers, cabbages, brocoli, lettuces, &c. all the refuſe of the Neapolitan kitchens, which are uſually collected by the gardeners boys, and carried to the gardens round Naples, to be mixed with other manure.

"Well filled panniers truly," ſaid Piedro, as he overtook Franciſco and the aſs. The panniers were indeed not only filled to the top, but piled up with much ſkill and care, ſo that the load met over the animal's back.—"It is not a very heavy load for the aſs though it looks ſo large," ſaid Franciſco; "poor fellow, however, he ſhall have a little of this water," added he, leading the aſs to a pool by the road ſide.—"I was not thinking of the aſs, man; I was not thinking of any aſs, but of you, when I ſaid well filled panniers, truly!—This is your morning's work, I preſume, and you'll make another journey to Naples to-day, on the

ſame errand, I warrant, before your father thinks you have done enough?"— "Not before *my father* thinks I have done enough, but before I think ſo myſelf," replied Franciſco. "I do enough to ſatisfy myſelf and my father too, without ſlaving myſelf after your faſhion. Look here," ſaid Piedro, producing the money he had received for the fiſh, "all this was had for aſking for; it is no bad thing, you'll allow, to know how to aſk for money properly." "I ſhould be aſhamed to beg, or borrow either," ſaid Franciſco. "Neither did I get what you ſee by begging, or borrowing either," ſaid Piedro, "but by uſing my wits— not as you did yeſterday, when, like a novice, you ſhewed the bruiſed ſide of your melon, and ſo ſpoiled your market by your wiſdom." "Wiſdom I think it ſtill," ſaid Franciſco. "And your father?" "And my father," ſaid Franciſco. "Mine is of a different way of thinking," ſaid

Piedro, "he always tells me, that the buyer has need of a hundred eyes, and if one can blind the whole hundred, ſo much the better. You muſt know, I got off the fiſh to-day that my father could not ſell yeſterday in the market—Got it off for freſh juſt out of the river—got twice as much as the market price for it, and from whom think you?—Why, from the very booby, that would have bought the bruiſed melon for a ſound one, if you would have let him.—You'll allow I'm no fool, Franciſco, and that I'm in a fair way to grow rich, if I go on as I have begun." "Stay," ſaid Franciſco, "you forgot that the booby you took in to-day will not be ſo eaſily taken in to-morrow. He will buy no more fiſh from you, becauſe he will be afraid of your cheating him; but he will be ready enough to buy fruit from me, becauſe he will know I ſhall not cheat him—So you'll have loſt a cuſ-

tomer, and I gained one." "With all my heart," ſaid Piedro, "one cuſtomer does not make a market; if he buys no more from me, what care I, there are people enough to buy fiſh in Naples." "And do you mean to ſerve them all in the ſame manner?" "If they will be only ſo good as to give me leave," ſaid Piedro, laughing, and repeating his father's proverb, "venture a ſmall fiſh to catch a large one*." He had learned to think, that to cheat in making bargains was witty and clever.—"And you have never conſidered then," ſaid Franciſco, "that all theſe people will, one after another, find you out in time." "Aye, in time, but it will be ſome time firſt, there are a great many of them, enough to laſt me all ſummer, if I loſe a cuſtomer a day," ſaid Piedro. "And next ſummer, what will you do?" "Next ſummer is not come yet; there is

* Butta una ſardella per pigliar un luccio.

time enough to think what I ſhall do before next ſummer comes. Why, now, ſuppoſe the blockheads, after they had been taken in, and found it out, all joined againſt me, and would buy none of our fiſh—What then? Are there no trades going but that of a fiſherman?—In Naples, are there not a hundred ways of making money for a ſmart lad like me? as my father ſays. What do you think of turning merchant, and ſelling ſugar-plums and cakes to the children in their market?—Would they be hard to deal with, think you?" "I think not," ſaid Franciſco; "but I think the children would find out in time if they were cheated, and would like it as little as the men." "I don't doubt them; then *in time* I could, you know, change my trade, ſell chips and ſticks in the wood market; hand about lemonade to the fine folks, or twenty other things---there are trades enough, man."—"Yes,

for the honeſt dealer," ſaid Franciſco, " but for no other; for in all of them you'll find, as *my* father ſays, that a good character is the beſt fortune to ſet up with. Change your trade ever ſo often, you'll be found out for what you are at laſt." " And what am I, pray?" ſaid Piedro, angrily—" the whole truth of the matter is, Franciſco, that you envy my good luck, and can't bear to hear this money jingle in my hand. Aye, ſtroak the long ears of your aſs, and look as wiſe as you pleaſe. Its better to be lucky than wiſe, as *my* father ſays. —Good morning to you, when I am found out for what I am, or when the worſt comes to the worſt, I can drive a ſtupid aſs, with his panniers filled with rubbiſh, as well as you do now, *honeſt Franciſco.*"—" Not quite ſo well; unleſs you were *honeſt Franciſco*, you would not fill his panniers quite ſo readily."

This was certain, that Franciſco was ſo well known for his honeſty amongſt all the people at Naples, with whom his father was acquainted, that every one was glad to deal with him; and as he never wronged any one, all were willing to ſerve him, at leaſt as much as they could without loſs to themſelves; ſo that after the market was over, his panniers were regularly filled by the gardeners and others, with whatever he wanted. His induſtry was conſtant, his gains ſmall but certain, and he every day had more and more reaſon to truſt to his father's maxim—That honeſty is the beſt policy.

The foreign ſervant lad, to whom Franciſco had ſo honeſtly, or, as Piedro ſaid, ſo ſillily, ſhewn the bruiſed ſide of the melon, was an Engliſhman. He left his native country, of which he was extremely fond, to attend upon his maſter, to whom he was ſtill more at-

tached. His maſter was in a declining ſtate of health, and this young lad waited upon him more to his mind than his other ſervants. We muſt, in conſideration of his zeal, fidelity, and inexperience, pardon him for not being a good judge of fiſh. Though he had ſimplicity enough to be eaſily cheated once, he had too much ſenſe to be twice made a dupe. The next time he met Piedro in the market, he happened to be in company with ſeveral Engliſh gentlemen's ſervants, and he pointed Piedro out to them all as an errant knave; they heard his cry of "freſh fiſh! freſh fiſh! fine freſh fiſh!" with incredulous ſmiles, and let him paſs, but not without ſome expreſſions of contempt, which, though uttered in Engliſh, he tolerably well underſtood, for the tone of contempt is ſufficiently expreſſive in all languages. He loſt more by not ſelling his fiſh to theſe people,

than he had gained the day before by cheating the *Engliſh booby*. The market was well ſupplied, and he could not get rid of his cargo. "Is not this truly provoking," ſaid he, as he paſſed by Franciſco, who was ſelling fruit for his father. "Look, my baſket is as heavy as when I left home, and look at 'em yourſelf, they really are fine freſh fiſh to-day, and yet, becauſe that revengeful booby told how I took him in yeſterday, not one of yonder crowd would buy them; and all the time they really are freſh to-day."—"So they are," ſaid Franciſco; "but you ſaid ſo yeſterday when they were not, and he that was duped then, is not ready to believe you to-day. How does he know that you deſerve it better?" "He might have looked at the fiſh, they are freſh to-day. I'm ſure," repeated Piedro, "he need not have been afraid to-day." "Aye," ſaid Fran-

ciſco, "but, as my father ſaid to you once, —The ſcalded dog fears cold water*."

Here their converſation was interrupted by the approach of this ſame Engliſh lad, who ſmiled as he came up to Franciſco, and taking up a fine pine apple, he ſaid, in a mixture of bad Italian and Engliſh—"I need not look at the other ſide of this—you will tell me if it is not as good as it looks; name your price, I know you have but one, and that an honeſt one, and as to the reſt, I am able and willing to pay for what I buy; that is to ſay, my maſter is, which comes to the ſame thing. I wiſh your fruit could make him well, and it would be worth its weight in gold, to me at leaſt.—We muſt have ſome of your grapes for him."—"Is not he well? we muſt then pick out the beſt for him," ſaid Franciſco, ſingling out a tempting

* L'an ſcottato de l'acqua calda ha paura poi della fredda.

bunch—"I hope he will like these; but if you could some day come as far as Resina, it is a village but a few miles out of town, where we have our vineyard, you could there choose for yourself, and pluck them fresh from the vines for your poor master."—"God bless you, my good boy, I should take you for an Englishman, by your way of dealing with one. I'll come to your village, only write me down the name, for your Italian names slip through my head; I'll come to your vineyard if it was ten miles off; and all the time we stay in Naples (God send it may not be so long as I fear it will) I'll, with my master's leave, which he never refuses me to any thing that's proper, and that's what this is, deal with you for all our fruit, as sure as my name's Arthur, and with none else, with my good will. I wish all your countrymen would take after you in honesty—so I do—"con-

cluded the Engliſhman, looking full at Piedro, who took up his heavy melancholy baſket of fiſh, and walked off, looking ſomewhat ſilly.

Arthur, the Engliſh ſervant, was as good as his word; he dealt conſtantly with Franciſco, and proved an excellent cuſtomer, buying from him during the whole ſeaſon as much fruit as his maſter wanted. His maſter, who was an Engliſhman of diſtinction, was invited to take up his reſidence during his ſtay in Italy, at the Count de F.'s villa, which was in the environs of Naples, an eaſy walk from Reſina. Franciſco had the pleaſure of ſeeing his father's vineyard often full of generous viſitors; and Arthur, who had circulated the anecdote of the bruiſed melon was, he ſaid, "proud to think that ſome of this was his doing, and that an Engliſhman never forgot a good turn, be it from a countryman or foreigner."

"My dear boy," ſaid Franciſco's father to him, whilſt Arthur was in the vineyard helping to tend the vines, "I am to thank you and your honeſty it ſeems for our having our hands ſo full of buſineſs this ſeaſon. It is fair you ſhould have a ſhare of our profits." "So I have father, enough and enough, when I ſee you and mother going on ſo well. What can I want more?"—"Oh, my brave boy, we know you are a grateful good ſon; but I have been your age myſelf; you have companions; you have little expenſes of your own. Here, this vine, this fig-tree, and a melon a week next ſummer ſhall be your's—With theſe you'll make a fine figure amongſt the little Neapolitan merchants—and all I wiſh is, you may proſper as well, and by the ſame honeſt means, in managing for yourſelf, as you have done in managing for me." "Thank you, father, and if I proſper at all, it ſhall

be by thoſe means and no other, or I ſhould not be worthy to be called your ſon."

Piedro, the cunning, did not make quite ſo ſucceſsful a ſummer's work as did Franciſco, the honeſt. No extraordinary events happened, no ſingular inſtance of bad or good luck occurred; but he felt, as perſons uſually do, the natural conſequences of his own actions.—He purſued his ſcheme of impoſing, as far as he could, upon every perſon he dealt with, and the conſequence was, that at laſt nobody would deal with him.—"It is eaſy to out-wit one perſon, but impoſſible to out-wit all the world," ſaid a man * who knew the world at leaſt as well as either Piedro, or his father.—Piedro's father, amongſt others, had reaſon to complain; he ſaw his old cuſ-

* The duke de Rochefoucault—"On peut être plus fin qu'un autre, mais pas plus fin que tous les autres."

tomers fall off from him, and was told, whenever he went into the market, that his ſon was ſuch a cheat, there was no dealing with him. One day when he was returning from market in a very bad humour, in conſequence of theſe reproaches, and of his not having found cuſtomers for his goods, he eſpied his *ſmart* ſon Piedro, at a little merchant's fruit board, devouring a fine gourd with prodigious greedineſs—"Where, glutton, do you find money to pay for theſe dainties?" exclaimed his father, coming cloſe up to him with angry geſtures.—Piedro's mouth was much too full to make an immediate reply, nor did his father wait for any, but darting his hand into the youth's pocket, pulled forth a handful of ſilver. "The money, father," ſaid Piedro, "that I got for the fiſh yeſterday, and that I meant to give you to-day, before you went out." "Then I'll make you remember it againſt ano-

ther time, ſirrah!" ſaid his father, "I'll teach you to fill your ſtomach with my money!—Am I to loſe my cuſtomers by your tricks, and then find you here eating my all?—You are a rogue, and every body has found you out to be a rogue; and the worſt of rogues I find you, who ſcruples not to cheat his own father." Saying theſe words, with great vehemence he ſeized hold of Piedro, and in the very midſt of the little fruit market gave him a ſevere beating. This beating did the boy no good; it was vengeance, not puniſhment. Piedro ſaw that his father was in a paſſion, and knew that he was beaten becauſe he was found out to be a rogue, rather than for being one; he recollected perfectly, that his father once ſaid to him, "Let every one take care of his own grapes." Indeed it was ſcarcely reaſonable to expect, that a boy who had been educated to think that he might cheat every cuſ-

tomer he could in the way of trade, ſhould be afterwards ſcrupulouſly honeſt in his conduct towards the father, whoſe proverbs encouraged his childhood in cunning. Piedro writhed with bodily pain, as he left the market, after his drubbing, but his mind was not in the leaſt amended; on the contrary, he was hardened to the ſenſe of ſhame, by the loſs of reputation. All the little merchants were ſpectators of this ſcene, and heard his father's words.—"You *are* a rogue, and the worſt of rogues, who ſcruples not to cheat his own father." Theſe words were long remembered, and long did Piedro feel their effects. He once flattered himſelf, that, when his trade of ſelling fiſh failed him, he could readily engage in ſome other; but he now found to his mortification, that what Franciſco's father ſaid proved true, in all trades the beſt fortune to ſet up with is a good character. Not one of the little Nea-

politan merchants would either enter into partnerſhip with him, give him credit, or even trade with him for ready money.—"If you would cheat your own father, to be ſure you will cheat us," was continually ſaid to him by theſe prudent little people. Piedro was taunted and treated with contempt at home and abroad. His father, when he found that his ſon's *ſmartneſs* was no longer uſeful in making bargains, ſhoved him out of his way whenever he met him; all the food or clothes that he had at home ſeemed to be given to him grudgingly, and with ſuch expreſſions as theſe—"Take that, but it is too good for you; you muſt eat this, now, inſtead of gourds and figs, and be thankful you have even this." Piedro ſpent a whole winter very unhappily; he expected that all his old tricks, and eſpecially what his father had ſaid of him in the market place would be ſoon

forgotten; but month paſſed after month, and ſtill theſe things were freſh in the memory of all who had known them. It is not eaſy to get rid of a bad character. A very great rogue * was once heard to ſay, that he would, with all his heart, give ten thouſand pounds for a good character, becauſe he knew that he could make twenty thouſand by it. Something like this was the ſentiment of our cunning hero, when he experienced the evils of a bad reputation, and when he ſaw the numerous advantages, which Franciſco's good character procured. Such had been Piedro's wretched education, that even the hard leſſons of experience could not alter its pernicious effects. He was ſorry his knavery had been detected, but he ſtill thought it clever to cheat, and was ſecretly perſuaded, that, if he had

* Chartres.

cheated ſucceſsfully, he ſhould have been happy. "But I know I am not happy now," ſaid he to himſelf one morning, as he ſat alone diſconſolate by the ſea ſhore, dreſſed in tattered garments, weak and hungry, with an empty baſket beſide him. His fiſhing rod, which he held between his knees, bent over the dry ſands inſtead of into the water, for he was not thinking of what he was about; his arms were folded, his head hung down, and his ragged hat was ſlouched over his face. He was a melancholy ſpectacle. Franciſco, as he was coming from his father's vineyard with a large diſh of purple and white grapes upon his head, and a baſket of melons and figs hanging upon his arm, chanced to ſee Piedro ſeated in this melancholy poſture. Touched with compaſſion, Franciſco approached him ſoftly; his footſteps were not heard upon the ſands, and Piedro did not per-

ceive, that any one was near him, till he felt ſomething cold touch his hand; he then ſtarted, and looking up, ſaw a bunch of ripe grapes, which Franciſco was holding over his head.—"Eat them, you'll find them very good, I hope," ſaid Franciſco, with a benevolent ſmile. —"They are excellent—moſt excellent, and I am much obliged to you Franciſco," ſaid Piedro. "I was very hungry, and that's what I often am now, without any body's caring any thing about it. I am not the favourite I was with my father, but I know it is all my own fault."—"Well, but cheer up," ſaid Franciſco, "my father always ſays, one who knows he has been in fault, and acknowledges it, will ſcarcely be in fault again. Yes, take as many figs as you will," continued he, and he held his baſket cloſer to Piedro, who, as he ſaw, caſt a hungry eye upon one of the ripe figs.—"But," ſaid Piedro, af-

ter he had taken ſeveral, "ſhall not I get you into a ſcrape by taking ſo many? Won't your father be apt to miſs them?" "Do you think I would give them to you if they were not my own?" ſaid Franciſco, with a ſudden glance of indignation. "Well, don't be angry that I aſked the queſtion; it was only from fear of getting you into diſgrace that I aſked it." "It would not be eaſy for any body to do that, I hope," ſaid Franciſco, rather proudly.—"And to me leſs than any body," replied Piedro, in an inſinuating tone, "*I*, that am ſo much obliged to you!" "A bunch of grapes, and a few figs are no mighty obligation," ſaid Franciſco, ſmiling; "I wiſh I could do more for you; you ſeem, indeed, to have been very unhappy of late; we never ſee you in the markets as we uſed to do."——"No, ever ſince my father beat me, and called me rogue before all the children there,

I have never been able to ſhew my face without being gibed at by one or t'other. If you would but take me along with you amongſt them, and only juſt *ſeem* my friend for a day or two, or ſo, it would quite ſet me up again, for they all like you."——— "I would rather *be* than ſeem your friend, if I could," ſaid Franciſco.— "Aye, to be ſure, that would be ſtill better," ſaid Piedro, obſerving that Franciſco, as he uttered his laſt ſentence, was ſeparating the grapes, and other fruit, into two equal diviſions— "To be ſure I would rather you would *be* than *ſeem* a friend to me; but I thought that was too much to aſk at firſt—though I have a notion, notwithſtanding I have been ſo *unlucky* lately—I have a notion you would have no reaſon to repent of it; you would find me no bad hand if you were to try, and take me into partnerſhip."—

"Partnerſhip!" interrupted Franciſco, drawing back alarmed——"I had no thoughts of that." "But won't you, can't you," ſaid Piedro, in a ſupplicating tone; "*can't* you have thoughts of it? You'd find me a very active partner." Franciſco ſtill drew back, and kept his eyes fixed upon the ground—he was embarraſſed, for he pitied Piedro, and he ſcarcely knew how to point out to him that ſomething more is neceſſary in a partner in trade beſides activity—honeſty.—"Can't you?" repeated Piedro, thinking that he heſitated from merely mercenary motives. "You ſhall have what ſhare of the profits you pleaſe."—"I was not thinking of the profits," ſaid Franciſco, "but without meaning to be ill-natured to you, Piedro, I muſt ſay, that I cannot enter into any partnerſhip with you at preſent; but I will do what, perhaps, you will like as well," ſaid he, taking half the

fruit out of his baſket.—"You are heartily welcome to this; try and ſell it in the children's fruit market; I'll go on before you, and ſpeak to thoſe I am acquainted with, and tell them you are going to ſet up a new character, and that you hope to make it a good one." "Hey, ſhall I?—Thank you for ever, dear Franciſco," cried Piedro, ſeizing his plentiful gift of fruit—"ſay what you pleaſe for me." "But don't make me ſay any thing that is not true," ſaid Franciſco, pauſing.—"No, to be ſure not," ſaid Piedro; "I *do* mean to give no room for ſcandal.—If I could get them to truſt me as they do you, I ſhould be happy indeed." "That is what you may do, if you pleaſe," ſaid Franciſco. "Adieu, I wiſh you well with all my heart, but I muſt leave you now, or I ſhall be too late for the market."

THE LITTLE MERCHANTS.

CHAPTER II.

Chi va piano, va ſano, e anchè lontano.
Fair and ſoftly goes far in a day.

PIEDRO had now an opportunity to eſtabliſh a good character. When he went into the market with his grapes and figs, he found that he was not ſhunned or taunted as uſual; all ſeemed diſpoſed to believe in his intended reformation, and to give him a fair trial. Theſe favorable diſpoſitions towards him were the conſequence of Franciſco's benevolent repreſentations: he told them, that he thought Piedro had ſuffered enough to cure him of his tricks, and that it would be cruelty in them,

becauſe he might once have been in fault, to baniſh him by their reproaches from amongſt them, and thus to prevent him from the means of gaining his livelihood honeſtly. Piedro made a good beginning, and gave what ſeveral of the younger cuſtomers thought excellent bargains: his grapes and figs were quickly ſold, and with the money that he got for them, he the next day purchaſed from a fruit dealer a freſh ſupply, and thus he went on for ſome time, conducting himſelf with ſcrupulous honeſty, ſo that he acquired ſome credit amongſt his companions. They no longer watched him with ſuſpicious eyes; they truſted to his meaſures and weights, and they counted leſs carefully the change which they received from him. The ſatisfaction he felt from this alteration in their manners was at firſt delightful to him; but in proportion to his credit his opportunities of defraud-

ing increaſed, and theſe became temptations, which he had not the firmneſs to reſiſt. His old manner of thinking recurred. "I make but a few ſhillings "a day, and this is but ſlow work," ſaid he to himſelf—"what ſignifies "my good character, if I make ſo "little by it." Light gains, and frequent, make a heavy purſe *, was one of Franciſco's proverbs. But Piedro was in too great haſte to get rich, to take *time* into his account. He ſet his invention to work, and he did not want for ingenuity, to deviſe means of cheating, without running the riſk of detection. He obſerved, that the younger part of the community were extremely fond of certain coloured ſugar-plums, and of burnt almonds; with the money he had earned by two months trading in fruit he layed in a large ſtock, or what

* Poco è ſpeſſo empie ilborſetto.

appeared to these little merchants a large stock of these almonds and sugar-plums, and he painted in capital gold coloured letters upon his board "the "sweetest, largest, most admirable su-"gar plums of all colours ever sold in "Naples to be had here; and in grati-"tude to his numerous customers, Piedro "adds to these, burnt almonds gratis."

This advertisement attracted the attention of all who could read, and many who could not read heard it repeated with delight. Crowds of children surrounded Piedro's board of promise, and they all went away the first day amply satisfied; each had a full measure of coloured sugar-plums at the usual price, and along with these a burnt almond gratis. The burnt almond had such an effect upon the public judgment, that it was universally allowed the sugar-plums were, as the advertisement set forth, the largest, sweetest, most admirable ever

ſold in Naples; though all the time theſe were in no reſpect better than any other ſugar-plums. It was generally reported, that Piedro gave full meaſure, fuller than was to be had at any other board in the city; he meaſured the ſugar-plums in a little cubical tin box, and this, it was affirmed, he heaped up to the top, and preſſed down before he poured out the contents into the open hands of his approving cuſtomers. This belief, and Piedro's popularity, continued longer even than he had expected; and, as he thought his ſugar-plums had now ſecured their reputation with *the generous public*, he gradually neglected to add burnt almonds gratis. One day a boy of about ten years old paſſed careleſsly by, whiſtling as he went along, and ſwinging a carpenter's rule in his hand. "Ha! what have we here?" cried he, ſtopping to read what was written on Piedro's board. "This pro-

miſes rarely.—Old as I am, and tall of my age, which makes the matter worſe, I am ſtill as fond of ſugar-plums as my little ſiſter, who is five years younger than I.—— Come, Signor, fill me quick, for I'm in haſte to taſte them, two meaſures of the ſweeteſt, largeſt, moſt admirable ſugar-plums in Naples —one meaſure for myſelf, and one for my little Roſetta."—" You'll pay for yourſelf and your ſiſter then," ſaid Piedro, " for no credit is given here." " No credit do I aſk," replied the lively boy; " when I told you I loved ſugar-plums, did I tell you I loved them, or even my ſiſter, ſo well as to run in debt for them? Here's for myſelf, and here's for my ſiſter's ſhare," ſaid he, laying down his money—" and now for the burnt almonds gratis my good-fellow."—" They are all out, I have been out of burnt almonds this great while," ſaid Piedro. " Then why

are they in your advertiſement here?" ſaid Carlo. "I have not had time to ſcratch them out of the board." "What, not when you have, by your own account, been out of them a great while? — I did not know it required ſo much time to blot out a few words— let us try;" and as he ſpoke, Carlo, for that was the name of Piedro's new cuſtomer, pulled a bit of white chalk out of his pocket, and drew a broad ſcore acroſs the line on the board which promiſed burnt almonds gratis.—"You are moſt impatient," ſaid Piedro; "I ſhall have a freſh ſtock of almonds to-morrow." "Why muſt the board tell a lie to-day?"—"It would ruin me to alter it," ſaid Piedro. "A lie may ruin you, but I could ſcarcely think the truth could."—"You have no right to meddle with me or my board," ſaid Piedro, put off his guard, and out of his uſual ſoft voice of civility, by this

laſt obſervation. "My character, and that of my board, are too firmly eſtabliſhed now for any chance cuſtomer like you to injure."—"I never dreamed of injuring you, or any one elſe," ſaid Carlo—"I wiſh, moreover, you may not injure yourſelf.—Do as you pleaſe with your board, but give me my ſugar-plums, for I have ſome right to meddle with thoſe, having paid for them."—"Hold out your hand then?" "No, put them in here if you pleaſe, put my ſiſter's at leaſt in here, ſhe likes to have them in this box; I bought ſome for her in it yeſterday, and ſhe'll think they taſte the better out of the ſame box. But how is this! your meaſure does not fill my box nearly; you give us very few ſugar-plums for our money."—"I give you full meaſure, as I give to every body."—"The meaſure ſhould be an inch cube, I know," ſaid Carlo; "that's what all the little mer-

chants have agreed to, you know."—"True," ſaid Piedro, "ſo it is."—"And ſo it is, I muſt allow," ſaid Carlo, meaſuring the outſide of it with the carpenter's rule which he held in his hand. "An inch every way—and yet by my eye—and I have no bad one, being uſed to meaſuring carpenter's work for my father, by my eye I ſhould think this would have held more ſugar-plums."—"The eye often deceives us," ſaid Piedro; "there's nothing like meaſuring you find."—"There's nothing like meaſuring I find indeed," replied Carlo, as he looked cloſely at the end of his rule, which, ſince he ſpoke laſt, he had put into the tin cube to take its depth in the inſide.—"This is not as deep by a quarter of an inch, Signor Piedro, meaſured within as it is meaſured without."—Piedro changed colour terribly, and ſeizing hold of the tin box, endeavoured to wreſt it from

the youth who meaſured ſo accurately. Carlo held his prize faſt, and lifting it above his head, he ran into the midſt of the ſquare where the little market was held, exclaiming, "A diſcovery! a diſcovery! that concerns all who love ſugar-plums. A diſcovery! a diſcovery! that concerns all who have ever bought the ſweeteſt, largeſt, moſt admirable ſugar-plums ever ſold in Naples."

The crowd gathered from all parts of the ſquare as he ſpoke. "We have bought, and we have bought of thoſe ſugar-plums," cried ſeveral little voices at once, "if you mean Piedro's."—"The ſame," continued Carlo, "he who, out of gratitude to his numerous cuſtomers, gives or promiſes to give burnt almonds gratis."—"Excellent they were!" cried ſeveral voices. "We all know Piedro well; but what's your diſcovery?"—"My diſcovery is," ſaid

Carlo, "that you, none of you, know Piedro. Look you here—look at this box, this is his measure—it has a false bottom—it holds only three quarters as much as it ought to do, and his numerous customers have all been cheated of one quarter of every measure of the admirable sugar-plums they have bought from him."—"Think twice of a good bargain," says the proverb.—"So we have been finely duped indeed," cried some, looking at one another with a mortified air. Full of courtesy, full of craft! * "So this is the meaning of his burnt almonds gratis," cried others; all joined in an uproar of indignation, except one, who, as he stood behind the rest, expressed in his countenance silent surprise and sorrow.—"Is this Piedro a relation of your's?" said

* Chi te fa piu carezza che non vuole,
O ingannato t'ha, o ingannar te vuole.

Carlo, going up to this silent person; "I am sorry, if he be, that I have published his disgrace, for I would not hurt *you*; you don't sell sugar-plums as he does I'm sure, for my little sister Rosetta has often bought from you. Can this Piedro be a friend of yours?"—"I wished to have been his friend, but I see I can't," said Francisco; "he is a neighbour of ours, and I pitied him; but since he is at his old tricks again, there's an end of the matter. I have reason to be obliged to you, for I was nearly taken in; he has behaved so well for some time past, that I intended this very evening to have gone to him, and to have told him, that I was willing to do for him what he has long begged of me to do, to enter into partnership with him." "Francisco! Francisco!—your measure, lend us your measure!" exclaimed a number of the little merchants crowding round him. "You have a measure for

ſugar plums, and we have all agreed to refer to that, and to ſee how much we have been cheated before we go to break Piedro's bench, and declare him bankrupt, * the puniſhment for all knaves." They preſſed on to Franciſco's board, obtained his meaſure, found that it held ſomething more than a quarter above the quantity that could be contained in Piedro's. The cries of the enraged populace were now moſt clamorous; they hung the juſt and unjuſt meaſure upon high poles, and forming themſelves into a formidable phalanx, they proceeded towards Piedro's well known yellow lettered board, exclaiming as

* This word comes from two Italian words Banco rotto—broken bench.—Bankers and merchants uſed formerly to count their money, and write their bills of exchange upon benches in the ſtreets—and when a merchant or banker loſt his credit, and was unable to pay his debts, his bench was broken.

they went along, "Common cauſe! common cauſe! the little Neapolitan merchants will have no knaves amongſt them! Break his bench! Break his bench! He is a bankrupt in honeſty."

Piedro ſaw the mob, heard the indignant clamour, and, terrified at the approach of numbers, he fled with the utmoſt precipitation, having ſcarcely time to pack up half his ſugar-plums; there was a prodigious number, more than would have filled many honeſt meaſures ſcattered upon the ground, and trampled under foot by the crowd. Piedro's bench was broken, and the public vengeance wreaked itſelf alſo upon his treacherous painted board. It was, after being much disfigured by various inſcriptions expreſſive of the univerſal contempt for Piedro, hung up in a conſpicuous part of the market-place, and the falſe meaſure was faſtened like a cap upon one of its corners.

Piedro could never more ſhew his face in this market, and all hopes of friendſhip—all hopes of partnerſhip with Franciſco were for ever at an end.

If rogues could calculate, they would ceaſe to be rogues, for they would certainly diſcover, that it is moſt for their intereſt to be honeſt—ſetting aſide the pleaſure of being eſteemed and beloved, of having a ſafe conſcience, with perfect freedom from all the various embarraſſments and terrors to which knaves are ſubject; is it not clear, that our crafty hero would have gained rather more by a partnerſhip with Franciſco, and by a fair character, than he could poſſibly obtain by fraudulent dealing in comfits?

When the mob had diſperſed, after ſatisfying themſelves with executing ſummary juſtice upon Piedro's bench and board, Franciſco found a carpenter's rule lying upon the ground near

Piedro's broken bench, which he recollected to have ſeen in the hands of Carlo; he examined it carefully, and he found Carlo's name written upon it, and the name of the ſtreet where he lived; and though it was conſiderably out of his way, he ſet out immediately to reſtore the rule, which was a very handſome one, to its rightful owner. After a hot walk through ſeveral ſtreets, he overtook Carlo, who had juſt reached the door of his own houſe. Carlo was particularly obliged to him, he ſaid, for reſtoring this rule to him, as it was a preſent from the maſter of a veſſel, who employed his father to do carpenter's work for him. "One ſhould not praiſe one's ſelf, they ſay," continued Carlo; "but I long ſo much to give you a good opinion of me, that I muſt tell you the whole hiſtory of the rule you have ſaved—it was given to me for having meaſured the work, and

made up the bill of a whole pleaſure-boat myſelf. You may gueſs I ſhould have been ſorry enough to have loſt it. Thank you for its being once more in my careleſs hands, and tell me I beg whenever I can do you any ſervice—by the by, I can make up for you a fruit-ſtall; I'll do it to-morrow, and it ſhall be the admiration of the market.—Is there any thing elſe you could think of for me?"—"Why, yes," ſaid Franciſco, "ſince you are ſo good-natured, perhaps you'd be kind enough to tell me the meaning of ſome of thoſe lines and figures that I ſee upon your rule—I have a great curioſity to know their uſe."—"That I'll explain to you with pleaſure, as far as I know them myſelf; but when I'm at a fault, my father, who is cleverer than I am, and underſtands trigonometry, can help us out."—"Trigonometry!" repeated Franciſco, not a little alarmed at this

high ſounding word; " that's what I certainly ſhall never underſtand."— " Oh never fear," replied Carlo, laughing; " I looked juſt as you do now, I felt juſt as you do now, all in a fright and a puzzle, when I firſt heard of angles and ſines, and verſ-ſines, and co-ſines, and arcs and centres, and compliments, and tangents."—" Oh mercy! mercy!" interrupted Franciſco, whilſt Carlo laughed with a ſenſe, but with a benevolent ſenſe of ſuperiority. " Why," ſaid he " you'll find all theſe things are nothing when you are uſed to them—but I cannot explain my rule to you here broiling in the ſun—beſides, it will not be the work of a day I promiſe you but come and ſee us at your leiſure hours, and we'll ſtudy it together—I have a great notion we ſhall become friends, and to begin, ſtep in with me now," ſaid Carlo, " and eat a little macaroni with us, I know it is ready by

this time; beſides, you'll ſee my father, and he'll ſhew you plenty of rules and compaſſes, as you like ſuch things, and then I'll go home with you in the cool of the evening, and you ſhall ſhow me your melons and vines, and teach me in time ſomething of gardening.—Oh, I ſee we muſt be good friends, juſt made for each other, ſo come in—no ceremony."

Carlo was not miſtaken in his predictions; he and Franciſco became very good friends, ſpent all their leiſure hours together, either in Carlo's workſhop, or in Franciſco's vineyard, and they mutually improved each other. Franciſco, before he ſaw his friend's rule, knew but juſt enough of arithmetic to calculate in his head the price of the fruit which he ſold in the market; but with Carlo's aſſiſtance, and with the ambition to underſtand the tables and figures upon the wonderful rule, he ſet

to work in earneſt, and, in due time
ſatisfied both himſelf and his maſter
" Who knows but theſe things that
am learning now may be of ſome uſe t
me before I die," ſaid Franciſco, as h
was ſitting one morning with his tutor
the carpenter.—" To be ſure it will,'
ſaid the carpenter, putting down hi
compaſſes with which he was drawing
a circle—" Arithmetic is a moſt uſefu
and I was going to ſay neceſſary thing
to be known by men in all ſtations, and
a little trigonometry does no harm; i
ſhort, my maxim is, no knowledg
comes amiſs; for a man's head is of a
much uſe to him, and more than hi
hands.

A word to the wiſe will always ſuffice.*

Beſides, to ſay nothing of making a for-
tune—is not there a great pleaſure i
being ſomething of a ſcholar, and being

* A buon intenditor, poche parole.

able to paſs one's time with one's book, and one's compaſſes and pencil? Safe companions theſe for young and old; no one gets into miſchief that has pleaſant things to think of, and to do when alone, and I know, for my part, trigonometry is——"

Here the carpenter, juſt as he was going to pronounce a freſh panegyric upon his favourite trigonometry, was interrupted by the ſudden entrance of his little daughter Roſetta, all in tears, a very unuſual ſpectacle! Roſetta, take the year round, ſhed fewer tears than any child of her age in Naples. "Why, my dear good humoured little Roſetta, what has happened?"---"Why theſe large tears," ſaid her brother Carlo, and he went up to her, and wiped them from her cheeks.---"And theſe that are going over the bridge of the noſe ſo faſt, I muſt ſtop theſe tears too," ſaid Carlo. Roſetta, at this ſpeech, burſt out a laugh-

ing, and ſaid, "that ſhe did not know till then, that ſhe had any bridge on her noſe." "And were theſe ſhells the cauſe of the tears?" ſaid her brother, looking at a heap of ſhells, which ſhe held before her in her frock. "Yes, partly," ſaid Roſetta, "it was partly my own fault, but not all. You know I went out to the carpenter's yard, near the arſenal, where all the children are picking up chips and ſticks ſo buſily, and I was as buſy as any of them, becauſe I wanted to fill my baſket ſoon, and then I thought I ſhould ſell my baſketful directly in the little wood market. And as ſoon as I had filled my baſket, and made up my faggot, which was not done, brother, till I was almoſt baked by the ſun, for I was forced to wait by the carpenters for the bits of wood to make up my faggot, I ſay, when it was all ready, and my baſket full, I left it altogether in the yard." "That

was not wiſe to leave it," ſaid Carlo.—"But I only left it for a few minutes, brother, and I could not think any body would be ſo diſhoneſt as to take it whilſt I was away. I only juſt ran to tell a boy, who had picked up all theſe beautiful ſhells upon the ſea ſhore, and who wanted to ſell them, that I ſhould be glad to buy them from him, if he would only be ſo good as to keep them for me, for an hour or ſo, till I had carried my wood to market, and till I had ſold it, and ſo had money to pay him for the ſhells." "Your heart was ſet mightily on theſe ſhells, Roſetta?"—"Yes; for I thought you and Franciſco, brother, would like to have them, for your nice grotto that you are making at Reſina, that was the reaſon I was in ſuch a hurry to get them. The boy who had them to ſell was very good-natured; he poured them into my lap, and ſaid I had ſuch an honeſt face, he would truſt me, and that as he was in a

great hurry, he could not wait an hour whilſt I ſold my wood; but that he was ſure I would pay him in the evening, and he told me that he would call here this evening for the money; but now, what ſhall I do, Carlo? I ſhall have no money to give him, I muſt give him back his ſhells, and that's a great pity." "But, how happened it that you did not ſell your wood?"—"Oh, I forgot; did not I tell you that?—When I went back for my baſket, do you know it was empty, quite empty, not a chip left.—Some diſhoneſt perſon had carried it all off.—Had not I reaſon to cry now, Carlo?"—"I'll go this minute into the wood-market, and ſee if I can find your faggot, won't that be better than crying?"—ſaid her brother. "Should you know any one of your pieces of wood again, if you were to ſee them." "Yes, one of them, I am ſure, I ſhould know again," ſaid Roſetta.—"It had a notch

at one end of it, where one of the carpenters cut it off from another piece of wood for me." "And is the piece of wood from which the carpenter cut it ſtill to be ſeen," ſaid Franciſco—"Yes, it is in the yard; but I cannot bring it to you, for it is very heavy." "We can go to it," ſaid Franciſco, "and I hope we ſhall recover your baſket full." He and Carlo went with Roſetta immediately to the yard, near the arſenal, ſaw the notched piece of wood, and then proceeded to the little wood-market, and ſearched every heap that lay before the little factors, but no notched bit was to be found, and Roſetta declared that ſhe did not ſee one ſtick that looked at all like any of her's.—On their part, her companions eagerly untied their faggots to ſhew them to her, and exclaimed, "that they were incapable of taking what did not belong to them;—that of all perſons they

ſhould never have thought of taking any thing from the good-natured little Roſetta, who was always ready to give to others, and to help them in making up their loads."

Deſpairing of diſcovering the thief, Franciſco and Carlo left the market; as they were returning home, they were met by the Engliſh ſervant Arthur, who aſked Franciſco where he had been, and where he was going. As ſoon as he heard of Roſetta's loſt faggot, and of the bit of wood, notched at one end, of which Roſetta drew the ſhape with a bit of chalk, that her brother lent her, Arthur exclaimed, "I have ſeen ſuch a bit of wood as this within this quarter of an hour, but I cannot recollect where!—Stay—It was at the baker's, I think, where I went for ſome rolls for my maſter. It was lying beſide his oven." To the baker's they all went as faſt as poſſible, and they got there but juſt in

time, the baker had in his hand the bit of wood, with which he was that inſtant going to feed his oven. "Stop, good Mr. Baker!" cried Roſetta, who ran into the baker's ſhop firſt, and as he heard ſtop! ſtop! re-echoed by many voices, the baker ſtopped, and turning to Franciſco, Carlo, and Arthur, begged, with a countenance of ſome ſurpriſe, to know why they deſired him to ſtop. The caſe was eaſily explained, and the baker told them, that he did not buy any wood in the little market that morning. That this faggot he had purchaſed, between the hours of twelve and thirteen *, from a lad of about Franciſco's height, whom he met near the yard of the arſenal. "This is my bit of wood, I am ſure, I know it by this notch," ſaid Roſetta.—"Well," ſaid the baker, "if

* The Italians begin their day at ſun-ſet, and reckon the hours in an uninterrupted ſeries from one to twenty-four.

you will ſtay here a few minutes you will probably ſee the lad who ſold it to me; he deſired to be paid in bread, and my bread was not quite baked when he was here; I bid him call again in an hour, and I fancy he will be pretty punctual, for he looked deſperately hungry." The baker had ſcarcely finiſhed ſpeaking, when Franciſco, who was ſtanding watching at the door, exclaimed "Here comes Piedro! I hope he is not the boy who ſold you the wood, Mr. Baker?" "He is the boy though," replied the baker, and Piedro, who now entered the ſhop, ſtarted at ſight of Carlo and Franciſco, whom he had never ſeen ſince the day of diſgrace in the fruit market.

"Your ſervant, Signor Piedro," ſaid Carlo; "I have the honour to tell you, that this piece of wood, and all that you took out of the baſket, which you found in the yard of the arſenal, be-

longs to my ſiſter." "Yes, indeed, cried Roſetta.---Piedro being very certain, that no body ſaw him when he emptied Roſetta's baſket, and imagining that he was ſuſpected only upon the bare aſſertion of a child like Roſetta, who might be baffled and frightened out of her ſtory, boldly denied the charge, and defied any one to prove him guilty. "He has a right to be heard in his own defence," ſaid Arthur, with the cool juſtice of an Engliſhman; and he ſtopped the angry Carlo's arm, who was going up to the culprit with all the Italian vehemence of oratory and geſture. Arthur went on to ſay ſomething in bad Italian, about the excellence of an Engliſh trial by jury, which Carlo was too much enraged to hear, but to which Franciſco paid attention, and turning to Piedro, he aſked him if he was willing to be judged by twelve of his equals? "With all my heart," ſaid

Piedro, ſtill maintaining an unmoved countenance, and they returned immediately to the little wood market.

In their way, they had paſſed through the fruit market, and crowds of thoſe who were well acquainted with Piedro's former tranſactions, followed to hear the event of the preſent trial. Arthur could not, eſpecially as he ſpoke wretched Italian, make the eager little merchants underſtand the nature and advantages of an Engliſh trial by jury. They preferred their own ſummary mode of proceeding. Franciſco, in whoſe integrity all had perfect confidence, was choſen with unanimous ſhouts for the judge, but he declined the office, and another was appointed. He was raiſed upon a bench, and the guilty, but inſolent looking Piedro, and the ingenuous, modeſt Roſetta ſtood before him. She made her complaint in a very artleſs manner, and Piedro, with ingenuity, which in a bet-

ter cauſe would have deſerved admiration, ſpoke volubly and craftily in his own defence; but all that he could ſay could not alter facts. The judge compared the notched bit of wood found at the baker's, with the piece from which it was cut, which he went to ſee in the yard of the arſenal.—It was found to fit exactly. The judge then found it impoſſible to reſtrain the loud indignation of all the ſpectators. The priſoner was ſentenced never more to ſell wood in that market, and the moment ſentence was pronounced, Piedro was hiſſed and hooted out of the market-place.——Thus a third time he deprived himſelf of the means of earning his bread.

We ſhall not dwell upon all his petty methods of cheating in the trades he next attempted. He handed lemonade about in a part of Naples where he was not known; but he loſt his cuſtomers

by putting too much water, and too little lemon into this beverage. He then took to the waters from the ſulphureous ſprings, and ſerved them about to foreigners ;—but one day, as he was trying to joſtle a competitor from a coach door, he ſlipped his foot, and broke his glaſſes. They had been borrowed from an old woman, who hired out glaſſes to the boys who ſold lemonade. Piedro knew, that it was the cuſtom to pay of courſe for all that were broken ; but this he was not inclined to do—he had a few ſhillings in his pocket, and thought that it would be very clever, to defraud this poor woman of her right, and to ſpend his ſhillings upon what he valued much more than he did his good name—macaroni. The ſhillings were ſoon gone.—And we ſhall for the preſent leave Piedro to his follies, and his fate, or to ſpeak more properly, to his follies, and their inevitable conſequences.

Franciſco was all this time acquiring knowledge from his new friends, without neglecting his own or his father's buſineſs. He contrived, during the courſe of the autumn and winter, to make himſelf a tolerable arithmetician. Carlo's father could draw plans in architecture neatly, and pleaſed with the eagerneſs Franciſco ſhewed to receive inſtruction, he willingly put a pencil and compaſſes into his hand, and taught him all he knew himſelf. Franciſco had great perſeverance, and, by repeated trials, he at length ſucceeded in copying exactly all the plans which his maſter lent him. His copies, in time, ſurpaſſed the originals, and Carlo exclaimed, with aſtoniſhment:—"Why, Franciſco, what an aſtoniſhing *genius* you have for drawing!—Abſolutely you draw plans better than my father!"—"As to genius," ſaid Franciſco, ho-

neſtly, "I have none.—All that I have done has been done by hard labour; I don't know how other people do things, but I am ſure that I never have been able to get any thing done well but by patience; don't you remember, Carlo, how you, and even Roſetta, laughed at me the firſt time your father put a pencil into my aukward, clumſy hands."—"Becauſe," ſaid Carlo, laughing again at the recollection, "you held your pencil ſo drolly; and when you were to cut it, you cut it juſt as if you were uſing a pruning knife to your vines; but now it is your turn to laugh, for you ſurpaſs us all. And the times are changed, ſince I ſet about to explain this rule of mine to you." "Aye, that rule," ſaid Franciſco, "how much I owe to it.—Some great people, when they loſe any of their fine things, cauſe the crier to promiſe a reward of ſo much money to whoever ſhall find and reſtore their trinket;

how richly have you and your father rewarded me for returning this rule!"

Franciſco's modeſty and gratitude, as they were perfectly ſincere, attached his friends to him moſt powerfully; but there was one perſon, who regretted our hero's frequent abſences from his vineyard at Reſina. Not Franciſco's father, for he was well ſatisfied his ſon never neglected his buſineſs; and as to the hours ſpent in Naples, he had ſo much confidence in Franciſco, that he felt no apprehenſions of his getting into bad company.—When his ſon had once ſaid to him, "I ſpend my time at ſuch a place, and in ſuch and ſuch a manner," he was as well convinced of its being ſo, as if he had watched, and ſeen him every moment of the day. But it was Arthur who complained of Franciſco's abſence. "I ſee, becauſe I am an Engliſhman," ſaid he, "you don't value my friendſhip, and yet that is the very

reaſon you ought to value it—no friends ſo good as the Engliſh,—be it ſpoken without offence to your Italian friend, for whom you now continually leave me to dodge up and down here in Reſina, without a ſoul that I like to ſpeak to, for you are the only Italian I ever liked." "You *ſhall*, like another, I promiſe you," ſaid Franciſco, "you muſt come with me to Carlo's, and ſee how I ſpend my evenings, then complain of me if you can." It was the utmoſt ſtretch of Arthur's complaiſance to pay this viſit, but in ſpite of his national prejudices, and habitual reſerve of temper, he was pleaſed with the reception he met with from the generous Carlo, and the playful Roſetta. They ſhewed him Franciſco's drawings with enthuſiaſtic eagerneſs; and Arthur, though no great judge of drawing, was in aſtoniſhment, and frequently repeated,—"I know a gentleman who viſits my maſter, who

would like theſe things.—I wiſh I might have them to ſhew him." "Take them then," ſaid Carlo, "I wiſh all Naples could ſee them, provided they might be liked half as well as I like them."

Arthur carried off the drawings, and one day, when his maſter was better than uſual, and when he was at leiſure, eating a deſert of Franciſco's grapes, he entered reſpectfully with his little port-folio under his arm, and begged permiſſion to ſhew his maſter a few drawings, done by the gardener's ſon, whoſe grapes he was eating. Though not quite ſo partial a judge as the enthuſiaſtic Carlo, this gentleman was both pleaſed and ſurpriſed at the ſight of theſe drawings, conſidering how ſhort a time Franciſco had applied himſelf to this art, and what ſlight inſtructions he had received. Arthur was deſired to ſummon the young artiſt. Franciſco's honeſt, open manner, joined to the proofs he had given

of his abilities, and the character Arthur gave him for ſtrict honeſty, and conſtant kindneſs to his parents, intereſted Mr. L—, this Engliſh gentleman, much in his favour. Mr. L— was at this time in treaty with an Italian painter, whom he wiſhed to engage to copy for him exactly ſome of the cornices, mouldings, tablets, and antique ornaments, which are to be ſeen amongſt the ruins of the ancient city of Herculaneum *.

* We muſt give thoſe of our young Engliſh readers, who may not be acquainted with the ancient city of Herculaneum, ſome idea of it. None can be ignorant, that near Naples is the celebrated volcanic mountain of Veſuvius.—That, from time to time, there happen violent eruptions from this mountain, that is to ſay, flames and immenſe clouds of ſmoke iſſue from different openings, mouths, or *craters*, as they are called, but more eſpecially from the ſummit of the mountain, which is diſtinguiſhed by the name of *the* Crater. A rumbling, and after-

wards a roaring noiſe is heard within, and prodigious quantities of ſtones, and minerals burnt into maſſes (ſcoriæ) are thrown out of the crater, ſometimes to a great diſtance. The hot aſhes from mount Veſuvius have often been ſeen upon the roofs of the houſes of Naples, from which it is ſix miles diſtant. Streams of lava run down the ſides of the mountain during the time of an eruption, deſtroying every thing in their way, and overwhelm the houſes and vineyards which are in the neighbourhood. About 1700 years ago, during the reign of the Roman emperor Titus, there happened a terrible eruption of mount Veſuvius; and a large city called Herculaneum, which was ſituated at about four miles diſtance from the volcano, was overwhelmed by the ſtreams of lava, which poured into it, filled up the ſtreets, and quickly covered over the tops of the houſes, ſo that the whole was no more viſible. It remained for many years buried. The lava, which covered it, became in time fit for vegetation, plants grew there, a new ſoil was formed, and a new town called Portici was built over the place where Herculaneum formerly ſtood. The little village of Reſina alſo is ſituated near the ſpot. About fifty years ago, in a poor man's garden at Reſina, a hole in a well about thirty feet below

the surface of the earth was observed: Some persons had the curiosity to enter into this hole, and after creeping under ground for some time, they came to the foundations of houses. The peasants, inhabitants of the village, who had probably never heard of Herculaneum, were somewhat surprised at their discovery. * About the same time, in a pit in the town of Portici, a similar passage under ground was discovered, and by orders of the king of Naples, workmen were employed to dig away the earth, and clear the passages. They found, at length, the entrance into the town, which, during the reign of Titus, was buried under lava. It was about eighty-eight Neapolitan palms (a palm contains near nine inches) below the top of the pit. The workmen, as they cleared the passages, marked their way with chalk, when they came to any turning, lest they should lose themselves. The streets branched out in many directions, and lying across them, the workmen often found large pieces of timber, beams and rafters; some broken in the fall, others entire. These beams and rafters are burned quite black, and look like charcoal, except those that were found in moist places, which have more the colour of

* Philosophical Transactions, 9th Vol. page 440.

rotten wood, and which are like a ſoft paſte, into which you might run your hand. The walls of the houſes ſlant, ſome one way, ſome another, and ſome are upright. Several magnificent buildings of brick, faced with marble of different colours, are partly ſeen, where the workmen have cleared away the earth and lava, with which they were encruſted. Columns of red and white marble, and flights of marble ſteps, are ſeen in different places. And out of the ruins of the palaces, ſome very fine ſtatues and pictures have been dug. Foreigners who viſit Naples are extremely curious to ſee this ſubterraneous city, and are deſirous to carry with them into their own country ſome proofs of their having examined this wonderful place.

THE LITTLE MERCHANTS.

CHAPTER III.

Tutte le gran facende ſi fanno di poca colſa.
Great things hang upon ſmall wires.

SIGNOR Camillo, the artiſt employed by Mr. L— to copy ſome of the antique ornaments in Herculaneum, was a liberal minded man, perfectly free from that mean jealouſy, which would repreſs the effects of riſing genius.— "Here is a lad of ſcarcely fifteen, a "poor gardener's ſon, who, with merely "the inſtructions he could obtain from a "common carpenter, has learned to "draw theſe plans and elevations, which "you ſee are tolerably neat. What an "advantage your inſtructions would be

" to him," ſaid Mr. L—, as he introduced Franciſco to Signor Camillo. " I am intereſted for this lad, from " what I have learned of his good con- " duct—I hear he is ſtrictly honeſt, and " one of the beſt of ſons; let us do ſome- " thing for him; if you will give him " ſome knowledge of your art, I will, " as far as money can recompence you " for your loſs of time, pay whatever " you may think reaſonable for his in- " ſtructions." Signor Camillo made no difficulties, he was pleaſed with his pupil's appearance, and every day he liked him better and better. In the room where they worked together, there were ſome large books of drawings, and plates, which Franciſco ſaw now and then opened by his maſter, and which he had a great deſire to look over; but when he was left in the room by himſelf, he never touched them, becauſe he had not permiſſion. Signor Camillo, the firſt day

he came into this room with his pupil, ſaid to him, "Here are many valuable "books and drawings, young man; I "truſt, from the character I have heard "of you, that they will be perfectly "ſafe here."

Some weeks after Franciſco had been with the painter, they had occaſion to look for the front of a temple in one of theſe large books.—"What! don't you know in which book to look for it, Franciſco?" cried his maſter, with ſome impatience.—"Is it poſſible, that you have been here ſo long with theſe books, and that you cannot find the print I mean? Had you half the taſte I gave you credit for, you would have ſingled it out from all the reſt, and have it fixed in your memory." "But, ſignor, I never ſaw it," ſaid Franciſco, reſpectfully, "or, perhaps, I ſhould have preferred it." "That you never ſaw it, young man, is the very thing of which

I complain. Is a taſte for the arts to be learned, think you, by looking at the cover of a book like this?—Is it poſſible that you never thought of opening it?" "Often, and often," cried Franciſco, "have I longed to open it, but I thought it was forbidden me; and however great my curioſity in your abſence, I have never touched them. I hoped, indeed, that the time would come, when you would have the goodneſs to ſhew them to me." "And ſo it is come excellent young man," cried Camillo; "much as I love taſte, I love integrity more—I am now ſure of your having the one, and let me ſee whether you have, as I believe you have, the other. Sit you down here beſide me, and we will look over theſe books together."

The attention with which his young pupil examined every thing, and the pleaſure he unaffectedly expreſſed in

ſeing theſe excellent prints, ſufficiently convinced his judicious maſter, that it was not from the want of curioſity or taſte, that he had never opened theſe tempting volumes. His confidence in Franciſco was much increaſed by this circumſtance, ſlight as it may appear. One day ſignor Camillo came behind Franciſco, as he was drawing with much intentneſs, and tapping him upon the ſhoulder, he ſaid to him: "put up your pencils, and follow me; I can depend upon your integrity, I have pledged myſelf for it. Bring your note book with you, and follow me; I will this day ſhew you ſomething, that will entertain you at leaſt as much as my large book of prints.—Follow me—."

Franciſco followed, till they came to the pit near the entrance of Herculaneum.—"I have obtained leave for you to accompany me," ſaid his maſter, "and you know, I ſuppoſe, that this is

not a permiſſion granted to every one." Paintings of great value, beſides ornaments of gold and ſilver, antique bracelets, rings, &c. are from time to time found amongſt theſe ruins, and therefore it is neceſſary, that no perſon ſhould be admitted, whoſe honeſty cannot be depended upon. Even Franciſco's talents could not have advanced him in the world, we may remark, unleſs they had been united to integrity. He was much delighted and aſtoniſhed by the new ſcene, that was now opened to his view, and as he, day after day, accompanied his maſter to this ſubterraneous city, he had leiſure for obſervation. He was employed, as ſoon as he had gratified his curioſity, in drawing. There are niches in the walls in ſeveral places, from which pictures have been dug, and theſe niches are often adorned with elegant maſques, figures and animals, which have been left by the ignorant or

careleſs workmen, and which are going faſt to deſtruction. Signor Camillo, who was copying theſe for his Engliſh employer, had a mind to try his pupil's ſkill, and pointing to a niche bordered with groteſque figures, he deſired him to try, if he could make any hand of it. Franciſco made ſeveral trials, and at laſt finiſhed ſuch an excellent copy, that his enthuſiaſtic and generous maſter, with warm encomiums, carried it immedately to his patron, and he had the pleaſure to receive from Mr. L— a purſe containing five guineas, as a reward and encouragement for his pupil. Franciſco had no ſooner received this money, than he hurried home to his father and mother's cottage. His mother, ſome months before this time, had taken a ſmall dairy farm, and her ſon had once heard herexpreſs a wiſh, that ſhe was but rich enough to purchaſe a remarkably fine brinded cow, which belonged to a

farmer in the neighbourhood. "Here, my dear mother," cried Franciſco, pouring the guineas into her lap, "and here," continued he, emptying a bag, which contained about as much more, in ſmall Italian coins, the profits of trade, money he had fairly earned during the two years he ſold fruit amongſt the little Neapolitan merchants; "this is all your's, deareſt mother, and I hope it will be enough to pay for the brinded cow.—Nay, you muſt not refuſe me—I have ſet my heart upon that cow's being milked by you this very evening; and I'll produce my beſt bunches of grapes, and my father, perhaps, will give us a melon, for I've had no time for melons this ſeaſon, and I'll ſtep to Naples, and invite —— may I, mother?—my good friends, dear Carlo, and your favourite little Roſetta, and my old drawing maſter, and my friend Arthur, and we'll ſup with you at your dairy."

The happy mother thanked her ſon, and the father aſſured him that neither melon, nor pine-apple ſhould be ſpared, to make a ſupper worthy of his friends. The brinded cow was bought, and Arthur, and Carlo, and Roſetta, moſt joyfully accepted their invitation. The carpenter had unluckily appointed to ſettle a long account that day with one of his employers, and he could not accompany his children. It was a delicious evening, they left Naples juſt as the ſea breeze, after the heats of the day, was moſt refreſhingly felt. The walk to Reſina, the vineyard, the dairy, and moſt of all, the brinded cow, were praiſed by Carlo and Roſetta, with all the Italian ſuperlatives which ſignify, "Moſt beautiful! Moſt delightful! Moſt charming!" Whilſt the Engliſh Arthur, with as warm a heart, was more temperate in his praiſe, declaring, that this was "the moſt like an Engliſh

" ſummer's evening of any he had ever " felt ſince he came to Italy; and that, " moreover, the cream was almoſt as " good as what he had been uſed to " drink in Cheſhire." The company, who were all pleaſed with each other, and with the gardener's good fruit, which he produced in great abundance, did not think of ſeparating till late. It was a bright moon-light night, and Carlo aſked his friend, if he would walk with them part of the way to Naples. —" Yes, all the way, moſt willingly," cried Franciſco, " that I may have the pleaſure of giving to your father, with my own hands, this fine bunch of grapes, that I have reſerved for him out of my own ſhare."—" Add this fine pine-apple for my ſhare, then," ſaid his father, " and a pleaſant walk to you, my young friends."

They proceeded gaily along, and when they reached Naples, as they paſſed

through the ſquare, where the little merchants held their market, Franciſco pointed to the ſpot where he found Carlo's rule; he never miſſed an opportunity of ſhewing his friends, that he did not forget their former kindneſs to him. "That rule," ſaid he, "has been the "cauſe of all my preſent happineſs, "and I thank you for ——" "Oh, never mind thanking him now," interrupted Roſetta, "but look yonder, and tell me what all thoſe people are about." She pointed to a groupe of men, women, and children, who were aſſembled under a piazza, liſtening, in various attitudes of attention, to a man, who was ſtanding upon a flight of ſteps, ſpeaking in a loud voice, and with much action, to the people who ſurrounded him. Franciſco, Carlo, and Roſetta joined his audience. The moon ſhone full upon his countenance, which was very expreſſive, and which varied

frequently according to the characters of the perſons, whoſe hiſtory he was telling, and according to all the changes of their fortune. This man was one of thoſe who are called Improviſatori—perſons, who, in Italian towns, go about reciting verſes, or telling ſtories, which they are ſuppoſed to invent as they go on ſpeaking. Some of theſe people ſpeak with great oratory, and collect crowds round them in the public ſtreets. When he ſees the attention of his audience fixed, and when he comes to ſome very intereſting part of his narrative, the dextrous improviſatore drops his hat upon the ground, and pauſes till his auditors have paid their tribute to his eloquence. When he thinks the hat ſufficiently full, he takes it up again, and proceeds with his ſtory. The hat was dropped juſt as Franciſco and his two friends came under the piazza; the orator had finiſhed one ſtory, and

was going to commence another.—He fixed his eyes upon Franciſco, then glanced at Carlo and Roſetta, and after a moment's conſideration, he began a ſtory, which bore ſome reſemblance to one, that our young Engliſh readers may, perhaps, know by the name of "Cornaro, or the Grateful Turk." Franciſco was deeply intereſted in this narrative, and when the hat was dropped, he eagerly threw in his contribution. At the end of the ſtory, when the ſpeaker's voice ſtopped, there was a momentary ſilence, which was broken by the orator himſelf, who exclaimed, as he took up the hat which lay at his feet. "My friends, here is ſome miſtake! this is not my hat; it has been changed whilſt I was taken up with my ſtory—pray, gentlemen, find my hat amongſt you, it was a remarkably good one, a preſent from a nobleman for an epigram I made. I would not loſe my hat for

twice its value; pray, gentlemen, it has my name written within ſide of it, Dominicho Improviſatore.—Pray, gentlemen, examine your hats."

Every body preſent examined their hats, and ſhewed them to Dominicho, but his was not amongſt them. No one had left the company; the piazza was cleared, and ſearched in vain. "The hat has vaniſhed by magic," ſaid Dominicho.—"Yes, and by the ſame magic, a ſtatue moves," cried Carlo,—pointing to a figure ſtanding in a niche, which had hitherto eſcaped obſervation. The face was ſo much in the ſhade, that Carlo did not at firſt perceive, that the ſtatue was Piedro. Piedro, when he ſaw himſelf diſcovered, burſt into a loud laugh, and, throwing down Dominicho's hat, which he held in his hand behind him, cried "A pretty ſet of novices! Moſt excellent players at hide and ſeek you

would make." Whether Piedro really meant to have carried off the poor man's hat, or whether he was, as he ſaid, merely in jeſt, we leave it to thoſe who know his general character to decide. Carlo ſhook his head—"Still at your old tricks, Piedro," ſaid he. "Remember the old proverb: No fox ſo cunning but he comes to the furrier's at laſt *."—"I defy the furrier and you too," replied Piedro, taking up his own ragged hat.—"I have no need to ſteal hats, I can afford to buy better than you'll have upon your head. Franciſco, a word with you, if you have done crying at the pitiful ſtory you have been liſtening to ſo attentively."

"And what would you ſay to me," ſaid Franciſco, following him a few ſteps.—"Do not detain me long, becauſe my friends will wait for me." "If they

* Tutti le volpi ſi trovano in pellicera.

are friends they can wait," ſaid Piedro. "You need not be aſhamed of being ſeen in my company now, I can tell you, for I am, as I always told you I ſhould be, the richeſt man of the two." "Rich! You rich?" cried Franciſco; "well, then, it was impoſſible you could mean to trick that poor man out of his good hat." "Impoſſible!" ſaid Piedro. Franciſco did not conſider, that thoſe, who have habits of pilfering, continue to practiſe them often, when the poverty, which firſt tempted them to diſhoneſty, ceaſes. "Impoſſible! You ſtare when I tell you I am rich, but the thing is ſo—moreover, I am well with my father at home.—I have friends in Naples, and I call myſelf Piedro the Lucky. Look you here," ſaid he, producing an old gold coin; "this does not ſmell of fiſh does it? My father is no longer a fiſherman, nor I neither.—Neither do I ſell ſugar-plums to

children; nor do I ſlave myſelf in a vineyard, like ſome folks; but fortune, when I leaſt expected it, has ſtood my friend. I have many pieces of gold like this.—Digging in my father's garden, it was my luck to come to an old Roman veſſel full of gold. I have this day agreed for a houſe in Naples for my father. We ſhall live, whilſt we can afford it, like great folks, you will ſee, and I ſhall enjoy the envy that will be felt by ſome of my old friends, the little Neapolitan merchants, who will change their note when they ſee my change of fortune. What ſay you to all this, Franciſco the Honeſt?" "That I wiſh you joy of your proſperity, and hope you may enjoy it long and well." "Well! no doubt of that, every one who has it enjoys it *well:* He always dances well to whom fortune pipes*." "Yes,

* Aſſai ben balla a chi fortuna ſuona.

but no longer pipe no longer dance," replied Franciſco, and here they parted; for Piedro walked away abruptly, much mortified to perceive, that his proſperity did not excite much envy, or command any additional reſpect from Franciſco.

"I would rather," ſaid Franciſco, when he returned to Carlo and Roſetta, who waited for him under the portico, where he left them, "I would rather have ſuch good friends as you, Carlo and Arthur, and ſome more I could name, and, beſides that, have a clear conſcience, and work honeſtly for my bread, than be as lucky as Piedro.—Do you know, he has found a treaſure, he ſays, in his father's garden, a vaſe full of gold; he ſhewed me one of the gold pieces."—"Much good may they do him; I hope he came honeſtly by them," ſaid Carlo; "but ever ſince the affair of the double meaſure, I ſuſpect double dealing always from him. It is not our

affair, however, let him make himself happy his way, and we our's.

He that would live in peace and reſt,
Muſt hear, and ſee, and ſay the beſt *."

All Piedro's neighbours did not follow this peaceable maxim; for when he and his father began to circulate the ſtory of the treaſure found in the garden, the village of Reſina did not give them implicit faith. People nodded, and whiſpered, and ſhrugged their ſhoulders; then croſſed themſelves, and declared, that they would not for all the riches in Naples change places with either Piedro or his father. Regardleſs, or pretending to be regardleſs, of theſe ſuſpicions, Piedro and his father perſiſted in their aſſertions. The fiſhing nets were ſold, and every thing in their cottage was diſpoſed of; they left Reſina, went to live at Naples, and, after a few

* Ode, vede, tace, ſe vuoi viver in pace.

weeks, the matter began to be almoſt forgotten in the village. The old gardener, Franciſco's father, was one of thoſe who endeavoured to *think the beſt*, and all that he ſaid upon the ſubject was, that he would not exchange Franciſco the Honeſt, for Piedro the Lucky.—That one can't judge of the day till one ſees the evening as well as the morning *.

Not to leave our readers longer in ſuſpenſe, we muſt inform them, that the peaſants of Reſina were right in their ſuſpicions. Piedro had never found any treaſure in his father's garden, but he came by his gold in the following manner: after he was baniſhed from the little wood market for ſtealing Roſetta's baſket full of wood, after he had cheat-

* La vita il fine,—e'l di loda la ſera.
"Compute the morn and evening of their day."
POPE.

ed the poor woman, who let glaſſes out to hire, out of the value of the glaſſes which he broke, and, in ſhort, after he had entirely loſt his credit with all who knew him, he roamed about the ſtreets of Naples, reckleſs of what became of him.—He found the truth of the proverb, "that credit loſt is like a Venice glaſs broke—it can't be mended again." The few ſhillings, which he had in his pocket, ſupplied him with food for a few days; at laſt he was glad to be employed by one of the peaſants, who come to Naples to load their aſſes with manure out of the ſtreets. They often follow very early in the morning, or during the night time, the track of carriages that are gone, or that are returning from the opera; and Piedro was one night at this work, when the horſes of a nobleman's carriage took fright at the ſudden blaze of ſome fire-

works. The carriage was overturned near him;—a lady was taken out of it, and was hurried by her attendants into a ſhop, where ſhe ſtayed till her carriage was ſet to rights. She was too much alarmed for the firſt ten minutes after her accident, to think of any thing; but, after ſome time, ſhe perceived that ſhe had loſt a valuable diamond croſs, which ſhe had worn that night at the opera:—ſhe was uncertain where ſhe had dropped it; the ſhop, the carriage, the ſtreet, were ſearched for it in vain. Piedro ſaw it fall as the lady was lifted out of the carriage, ſeized upon it, and carried it off. Ignorant as he was of the full value of what he had ſtolen, he knew not how to ſatisfy himſelf as to this point, without truſting ſome one with the ſecret. After ſome heſitation, he determined to apply to a jew, who, as it was whiſpered, was ready to buy every thing that was offered to him for

ſale, without making any *troubleſome* inquiries. It was late; he waited till the ſtreets were cleared, and then knocked ſoftly at the back door of the jew's houſe. The perſon who opened the door for Piedro was his own father.—Piedro ſtarted back, but his father had faſt hold of him. "What brings you here? ſaid the father," in a low voice; a voice, which expreſſed fear and rage mixed. "By St. Nicholas, only to aſk my way, my ſhorteſt way," ſtammered Piedro. "No equivocations! —Tell me what brings you here at this time of night?—I *will* know."—Piedro, who felt himſelf in his father's graſp, and who knew, that his father would certainly ſearch him, to find out what he had brought to ſell, thought it moſt prudent, to produce the diamond croſs. His father could but juſt ſee its luſtre by the light of a dim lamp, which hung over their heads in the gloomy

paſſage, in which they ſtood. "You would have been duped, if you had gone to ſell this to the jew; it is well it has fallen into my hands.—How came you by it?" Piedro anſwered, that he had found it in the ſtreet. "Go your ways home, then," ſaid his father; "it is ſafe with me, concern yourſelf no more about it."

Piedro was not inclined thus to relinquiſh his booty, and he now thought proper, to vary in his account of the manner, in which he found the croſs. He now confeſſed, that it had dropped from the dreſs of a lady, whoſe carriage was overturned, as ſhe was coming home from the opera; and he concluded by ſaying, that, if his father took his prize from him, without giving him his ſhare of the profits, he would go directly to the ſhop, where the lady ſtopped whilſt her ſervants were raiſing the carriage, and that he would give notice of his having found the croſs. Piedro's father

ſaw, that his *ſmart* ſon, though ſcarcely ſixteen years of age, was a match for him in villainy. He promiſed him, that he ſhould have half of whatever the jew would give for the diamonds, and Piedro inſiſted upon being preſent at the tranſaction. We do not wiſh to lay open to our young readers ſcenes of iniquity; it is ſufficient to ſay, that the jew, who was a man old in all the arts of villainy, contrived to cheat both his aſſociates, and obtained the diamond croſs for leſs than half its value. The matter was managed ſo, that the tranſaction remained undiſcovered; the lady who loſt the croſs, after making fruitleſs inquiries, gave up the ſearch, and Piedro and his father rejoiced in the ſucceſs of their manœuvres. It is ſaid, that "Ill gotten wealth is quickly ſpent*," and ſo it proved in this inſtance; both

* Vien preſto conſumato l'ingiuſtamente acquiſtato.

father and ſon lived a riotous life, as long as their money laſted, and it did not laſt many months.—What his bad education began, bad company finiſhed, and Piedro's mind was completely ruined by the aſſociates, with whom he became connected during what he called his *proſperity*. When his money was at an end, theſe unprincipled friends began to look cold upon him, and at laſt plainly told him—"If you mean to *live with us*, you muſt *live as we do*." They lived by robbery.—Piedro, though familiariſed to the idea of fraud, was ſhocked at the thought of becoming a robber by profeſſion. How difficult it is to ſtop in the career of vice!

Whether Piedro had power to ſtop, or whether he was hurried on by his aſſociates, we ſhall, for the preſent, leave in doubt.

CHAPTER IV.

WE turn with pleaſure from Piedro the Cunning, to Franciſco the Honeſt. Franciſco continued the happy and uſeful courſe of his life; by his unremitting perſeverance, he improved himſelf rapidly under the inſtructions of his maſter and friend ſignor Camillo.—His friend, we ſay, for the fair and open character of Franciſco won, or rather earned, the friendſhip of this benevolent artiſt. The Engliſh gentleman ſeemed to take a pride in our hero's ſucceſs and good conduct; he was not one of thoſe patrons, who think that they have done enough, when they have

given five guineas. His ſervant, Arthur, always conſidered every generous action of his maſter's as his own, and was particularly pleaſed whenever this generoſity was directed towards Franciſco. As for Carlo, and the little Roſetta, they were the companions of all the pleaſant walks, which Franciſco uſed to take in the cool of the evening, after he had been ſhut up all day at his work. And the old carpenter, delighted with the gratitude of his pupil, frequently repeated.—"That he was proud to have given the firſt inſtructions to ſuch a *genius*, and that he had always propheſied Franciſco would be a *great* man."—"And a good man, papa," ſaid Roſetta; "for though he has grown ſo great, and though he goes into palaces now, to ſay nothing of that place under ground, where he has leave to go, yet, notwithſtanding all this, he never forgets my brother Carlo, and you." "That's the way to have good

friends," ſaid the carpenter.—"And I like his way; he does more than he ſays; Facts are maſculine, and words are feminine*."

Theſe good friends ſeemed to make Franciſco happier, than Piedro could be made by his ſtolen diamonds.

One morning Franciſco was ſent to finiſh a ſketch of the front of an ancient temple, amongſt the ruins of Herculaneum; he had juſt reached the pit, and the men were about to let him down with cords, in the uſual manner, when his attention was caught by the ſhrill ſound of a ſcolding woman's voice. He looked, and ſaw at ſome paces diſtant this female fury, who ſtood guarding the windlaſs of a well, to which, with threatening geſtures, and moſt voluble menaces, ſhe forbade all acceſs. The peaſants—men, women, and children,

* I fatti ſono maſchii, le parole femine.

who had come with their pitchers to draw water at this well, were held at bay by the enraged female; not one dared to be the firſt to advance; whilſt ſhe graſped with one hand the handle of the windlaſs, and, with the other tanned muſcular arm extended, governed the populace, bidding them remember, that ſhe was Padrona, or miſtreſs of the well. They retired, in hopes of finding a more gentle Padrona at ſome other well in the neighbourhood; and the fury, when they were out of ſight, divided the long black hair, which hung over her face, and, turning to ſome of the ſpectators, appealed to them in a ſober voice, and aſked if ſhe was not right in what ſhe had done?—"I, that am Padrona of the well," ſaid ſhe, addreſſing herſelf to Franciſco, who, with great attention, was contemplating her, with the eye of a painter—"I, that am Padrona of the well, muſt, in times of

ſcarcity, do ſtrict juſtice, and preſerve for ourſelves alone the water of our well —there is ſcarcely enough even for ourſelves. I have been obliged to make my huſband lengthen the ropes every day for this week paſt; if things go on at this rate, there will ſoon be not one drop of water left in my well."—"Nor in any of the wells in the neighbourhood," added one of the workmen who was ſtanding by; and he mentioned ſeveral in which the water had lately ſuddenly decreaſed; and a miller affirmed, that his mill had ſtopped for want of water. Franciſco was ſtruck by theſe remarks; they brought to his recollection ſimilar facts, which he had often heard his father mention in his childhood, as having been obſerved previous to the laſt eruption of mount Veſuvius *. He had alſo heard from his father, in his

* Phil. Tranſ. Vol. IX.

childhood, that it is better to truſt to prudence, than to fortune; and, therefore, though the peaſants and workmen, to whom he mentioned his fears, laughed, and ſaid—"That as the burning mountain had been favourable to them for ſo many years, they would truſt to it and St. Januarius one day longer." Yet Franciſco immediately gave up all thoughts of ſpending this day amidſt the ruins of Herculaneum. After having inquired ſufficiently, after having ſeen ſeveral wells, in which the water had evidently decreaſed, and after having ſeen the mill wheels, that were ſtanding ſtill for want of their uſual ſupply, he haſtened home to his father and mother, reported what he had heard and ſeen, and begged of them to remove, and to take what things of value they could to ſome diſtance from the dangerous ſpot where they now reſided.—Some of the inhabitants of Reſina,

whom he queſtioned, declared that they had heard ſtrange rumbling noiſes under ground, and a peaſant and his ſon, who had been at work the preceding day in a vineyard, a little above the village, related, that they had ſeen a ſudden puff of ſmoke come out of the earth, cloſe to them, and that they had, at the ſame time, heard a noiſe like the going off of a piſtol*. The villagers liſtened with large eyes, and open ears, to theſe relations, yet ſuch was their habitual attachment to the ſpot they lived upon, or ſuch their ſecurity in their own good fortune, that few of them would believe, that there could be any neceſſity for removing.—"We'll ſee what will happen to-morrow; we ſhall be ſafe here one day longer," ſaid they. Franciſco's father and mother, more

* Theſe facts are mentioned in Sir William Hamilton's account of the late eruption of mount Veſuvius.—See Phil. Tranſ. 1795, 1ſt part.

prudent than the generality of their neighbours, went to the houſe of a relation, at ſome miles diſtance from Veſuvius, and carried with them all their effects. In the mean time, Franciſco went to the villa where his Engliſh friends reſided; this villa, was in a moſt dangerous ſituation, near Torre del Greco, a town that ſtands at the foot of mount Veſuvius. He related all the facts, that he had heard, to Arthur, who, not having been, like the inhabitants of Reſina, familiariſed to the idea of living in the vicinity of a burning mountain, and habituated to truſt in St. Januarius, was ſufficiently alarmed by Franciſco's repreſentations; he ran to his maſter's apartment, and communicated, all, that he had juſt heard. The count di F— and his lady, who were at this time in the houſe, ridiculed the fears of Arthur, and could not be prevailed upon to remove, even as far as Naples.

The lady was intent upon preparations for her birth-day, which was to be celebrated in a few days, with great magnificence, at their villa; and ſhe obſerved, that it would be a pity to return to town before that day, as they had every thing arranged for the feſtival.—The prudent Engliſhman had not the gallantry, to appear to be convinced by theſe arguments, and he left this place of danger.—He left it not too ſoon, for the next morning exhibited a ſcene—a ſcene which we ſhall not attempt to deſcribe. We refer our young readers to the account Sir William Hamilton has publiſhed * of the laſt dreadful eruption of mount Veſuvius. It is ſufficient here to ſay, that, in the ſpace of about five hours, the wretched inhabitants of Torre del Greco ſaw their town utterly deſtroyed by the ſtreams of burning lava, which poured from the mountain. The villa

* Philoſophical Tranſactions.

of count de F—, with ſome others, which were at a little diſtance from the town, eſcaped; but they were abſolutely ſurrounded by the lava.—The count and counteſs were obliged to fly from their houſe with the utmoſt precipitation in the night time, and they had not time to remove any of their furniture, their plate, clothes, or jewels. A few days after the eruption, the ſurface of the lava became ſo cool, that people could walk upon it, though ſeveral feet beneath the ſurface it was ſtill exceedingly hot; numbers of thoſe, who had been forced from their houſes, now returned to the ruins, to try to ſave whatever they could; but theſe unfortunate perſons frequently found their houſes had been pillaged by robbers, who, in theſe moments of general confuſion, enrich themſelves with the ſpoils of their fellow creatures.

"Has the count abandoned his

villa? And is there no one to take care of his plate and furniture?—The houſe will certainly be ranſacked before morning," ſaid the old carpenter to Franciſco, who was at his houſe giving him an account of their flight. Franciſco immediately went to the count's houſe in Naples, to warn him of his danger.—The firſt perſon he ſaw was Arthur, who, with a face of terror, ſaid to him—"Do you know what has happened? It is all over with Reſina!" "All over with Reſina! What, has there been a freſh eruption? Has the lava reached Reſina?" "No;—but it will inevitably be blown up.—There," ſaid Arthur, pointing to a thin figure of an Italian, who ſtood pale and trembling, and looking up to Heaven, as he croſſed himſelf repeatedly—"There," ſaid Arthur, "is a man, who has left a parcel of his curſed rockets and fire-works, with I don't know how much gunpowder, in

the count's houſe, from which we have juſt fled; the wind blows that way; one ſpark of fire and the whole is blown up." Franciſco waited not to hear more, but inſtantly, without explaining his intentions to any one, ſet out for the count's villa, and, with a bucket of water in his hand, croſſed the beds of lava, with which the houſe was encompaſſed, reached the hall where the rockets and gunpowder were left, plunged them into the water, and returned with them in ſafety over the lava, yet warm under his feet. What was the ſurpriſe and joy of the poor fire-work maker, when he ſaw Franciſco return from this dangerous expedition; he could ſcarcely believe his eyes, when he ſaw the rockets and the gunpowder all ſafe. The count, who had given up the hopes of ſaving his palace, was in admiration when he heard of this inſtance of intrepidity, which probably ſaved not only his villa,

but the whole village of Reſina, from deſtruction. Theſe fire-works had been prepared for the celebration of the counteſs's birth-day, and were forgotten in the hurry of the night, on which the inhabitants fled from Torre del Greco.

"Brave young man," ſaid the count, to Franciſco, "I thank you, and ſhall not limit my gratitude to thanks.—You tell me, that there is danger of my villa's being pillaged by robbers; it is from this moment your intereſt as well as mine, to prevent their depredations, for a portion, truſt to my liberality, of all that is ſaved of mine ſhall be your's."

"Bravo! Braviſſimo!" exclaimed one, who ſtarted from a receſſed window in the hall where all this paſſed:—"Bravo! Braviſſimo!"——Franciſco thought he knew the voice and the countenance of this man, who exclaimed with ſo much enthuſiaſm; he remembered to have ſeen him before, but when, or where, he

could not recollect. As ſoon as the count left the hall, the ſtranger came up to Franciſco—" Is it poſſible," ſaid he, " that you don't know me?—It is ſcarcely a twelvemonth ſince I drew tears from your eyes."—" Tears from my eyes," repeated Franciſco, ſmiling, " I have ſhed but few tears.—I have had but few misfortunes in my life." The ſtranger anſwered him by two extempore Italian lines, which conveyed nearly the ſame idea that has been ſo well expreſſed by an Engliſh poet:

" To each their ſufferings—all are men
" Condemned alike to groan,
" The feeling for another's woes,
" Th' unfeeling for his own."

" I know you now perfectly well," cried Franciſco; " You are the Improviſatore, who, one fine moon-light night laſt ſummer, told us the ſtory of Cornaro, the Turk." " The ſame," ſaid the Improviſatore.—" The ſame, though in a

better dreſs, which I ſhould not have thought would have made ſo much difference in your eyes, though it makes all the difference between man and man in the eyes of the ſtupid vulgar. My genius has broken through the clouds of misfortune of late; a few happy impromptu verſes I made on the count de F—'s fall from his horſe attracted attention. The count patronizes me—I am here now to learn the fate of an ode I have juſt compoſed for his lady's birthday; my ode was to have been ſet to muſic, and to have been performed at his villa near Torre del Greco, if theſe troubles had not intervened. Now, that the mountain is quiet again, people will return to their ſenſes; I expect to be munificently rewarded. But, perhaps, I detain you. Go, I ſhall not forget to celebrate the heroic action you have performed this day. I ſtill amuſe myſelf amongſt the populace in my tat-

tered garb late in the evenings, and I ſhall ſound your praiſes through Naples in a poem I mean to recite on the late eruption of mount Veſuvius.—Adieu.''

The Improviſatore was as good as his word; that evening, with more than his uſual enthuſiaſm, he recited his verſes to a great crowd of people in one of the public ſquares. Amongſt the crowd were ſeveral, to whom the name of Franciſco was well known, and by whom he was well beloved. Theſe were his young companions, who remembered him as a fruit-ſeller amongſt the little merchants They rejoiced to hear his praiſes, and repeated the lines, with ſhouts of applauſe. "Let us paſs.—What is all this diſturbance in the ſtreets," ſaid a man, puſhing his way through the crowd—a lad, who held by his arm, ſtopped ſuddenly on hearing the name of Franciſco, which the people were repeating with ſo much enthuſiaſm. "Ha! I have

found at laſt a ſtory that intereſts you more than that of Cornaro the Turk," cried the Improviſatore, looking in the face of the youth, who had ſtopped ſo ſuddenly. " You are the young man, who, laſt ſummer, had like to have tricked me out of my new hat. Promiſe me you won't touch it now," ſaid he, throwing down the hat at his feet, "or you hear not one word I have to ſay.—Not one word of the heroic action performed at the villa of the count de F—, near Torre del Greco, this morning, by ſignor Franciſco."—" *Signor* Franciſco!" repeated the lad, with diſdain; " well, let us hear what you have to tell of him," added he.—" Your hat is very ſafe I promiſe you; I ſhall not touch it. —What of *ſignor* Franciſco?" " *Signor* Franciſco I may, without impropriety, call him," ſaid the Improviſatore, " for he is likely to become rich enough to command the title from thoſe, who

might not otherwiſe reſpect his merit." "Likely to become rich! how?" ſaid the lad; whom our readers have probably before this time diſcovered to be Piedro.—"How, pray, is he likely to become rich enough to be a ſignor?" ". The count de F— has promiſed him a liberal portion of all the fine furniture, plate, and jewels, that can be ſaved from his villa at Torre del Greco. Franciſco is gone down thither now with ſome of the count's domeſtics, to protect the valuable goods againſt thoſe villainous plunderers, who rob their fellow creatures of what even the flames of Veſuvius would ſpare."—"Come, we have had enough of this ſtuff," cried the man whoſe arm Piedro held.—"Come away,"—and he hurried forwards.

This man was one of the villains, againſt whom the honeſt orator expreſſed ſuch indignation. He was one

of thoſe, with whom Piedro got acquainted, during the time that he was living extravagantly upon the money he gained by the ſale of the ſtolen diamond croſs. That robbery was not diſcovered, and his *ſucceſs*, as he called it, hardened him in guilt; he was both unwilling and unable to withdraw himſelf from the bad company, with whom his ill gotten wealth connected him. He did not conſider, that bad company leads to the gallows *. The univerſal confuſion which followed the eruption of Mount Veſuvius, was, to theſe villains, a time of rejoicing. No ſooner was any wealthy houſe known to be forſaken by the poſſeſſors, than it was infeſted by theſe robbers. No ſooner did Piedro's companion hear of the rich furniture, plate, &c. which the imprudent orator had

* La mala compagnia è quella che mena huomini a la furca.

deſcribed as belonging to the count de F—'s villa, than he longed to make himſelf maſter of the whole.—" It is a pity," ſaid Piedro, " that the count has ſent Franciſco, with his ſervants, down to guard it." " And who is this Franciſco, of whom you ſeem to ſtand in ſuch awe?" " A boy, a young lad only, of about my own age, but I know him to be ſturdily honeſt; the ſervants we might corrupt; but even the old proverb of 'Angle with a ſilver hook*,' won't hold good with him." " And if he cannot be won by fair means, he muſt be conquered by foul," ſaid the deſperate villain; " but if we offer him rather more than the count has already promiſed, for his ſhare of the booty, of courſe he will conſult at once his ſafety and his intereſt." " No," ſaid Piedro, that is not his nature, I know him from

* Peſchar col hamo d'argento.

a child, and we had better think of ſome other houſe for to-night's buſineſs."—"None other; none but this," cried his companion, with an oath.—"My mind is determined upon this, and you muſt obey your leader;—recollect the fate of him who failed me yeſterday." The perſon, to whom he alluded, was one of the gang of robbers, who had been aſſaſſinated by his companions, for heſitating to commit ſome crime ſuggeſted by their leader. No tyranny is ſo dreadful as that, which is exerciſed by villains over their young accomplices, who become their ſlaves. Piedro, who was of a cowardly nature, trembled at the threatening countenance of his captain, and promiſed ſubmiſſion. In the courſe of the morning inquiries were made ſecretly amongſt the Count's ſervants; and the two men, who were engaged to ſit up at the Villa that night along with Franciſco, were

bribed to ſecond the views of this gang of thieves. It was agreed, that about midnight the robbers ſhould be let into the houſe—that Franciſco ſhould be tied hand and foot, whilſt they carried off their booty. "He is a ſtubborn chap, though ſo young, I underſtand," ſaid the captain of the robbers to his men; "but we carry poniards and know how to uſe them. Piedro, you look pale—you don't require to be reminded of what I ſaid to you, when we were alone juſt now?"

Piedro's voice failed, and ſome of his comrades obſerved, that he was young and new to the buſineſs. The captain, who, from being his pretended friend during his wealthy days, had of late become his tyrant, caſt a ſtern look at Piedro, and bid him be ſure to be at the old Jew's, which was the place of meeting, in the duſk of the evening. After ſaying this he departed: Piedro,

when he was alone, tried to collect his thoughts—all his thoughts were full of horror. "Where am I?" said he to himself; "what am I about? Did I understand rightly what he said about poniards?—Francisco! Oh! Francisco! Excellent, kind generous Francisco! yes, I recollect your look when you held the bunch of grapes to my lips as I sat by the sea shore deserted by all the world; and now, what friends have I? Robbers and—" the word *murderers* he could not utter; he again recollected what had been said about poniards, and the longer his mind fixed upon the words, and the look that accompanied them, the more he was shocked. He could not doubt, but that it was the serious intention of his accomplices to murder Francisco, if he should make any resistance. Piedro had at this moment no friend in the world, to whom he could apply for advice or assistance—his wretched father died

ſome weeks before this time in a fit of intoxication. Piedro walked up and down the ſtreet, ſcarcely capable of thinking, much leſs of coming to any rational reſolution—the hours paſſed away, the ſhadows of the houſes lengthened under his footſteps; the evening came on, and when it grew duſk, after heſitating in great agony of mind for ſome time, his fear of the robber's vengeance prevailed over every other feeling, and he went at the appointed hour to the place of meeting. The place of meeting was at the houſe of that Jew, to whom he, ſeveral months before, ſold the diamond croſs—that croſs, which he thought himſelf ſo lucky to have ſtolen, and to have diſpoſed of undetected, was, in fact, the cauſe of his being in his preſent dreadful ſituation. It was at the Jew's that he connected himſelf with this gang of robbers, to whom he was now become an abſolute ſlave. "O that

I dared to diſobey!" ſaid he to himſelf with a deep ſigh, as he knocked ſoftly at the back door of the Jew's houſe. The back door opened into a narrow unfrequented ſtreet, and ſome ſmall rooms at this ſide of the houſe were ſet apart for the reception of gueſts, who deſired to have their buſineſs kept ſecret. Theſe rooms were ſeparated by a dark paſſage from the reſt of the houſe, and numbers of people came to the ſhop in the front of the houſe, which looked into a creditable ſtreet, without knowing any thing more from the oſtenſible appearance of the ſhop, than that it was a kind of pawnbroker's, where old clothes, old iron, and all ſorts of refuſe goods, might be diſpoſed of conveniently. At the moment Piedro knocked at the back door, the front ſhop was full of cuſtomers, and the Jew's boy, whoſe office it was to attend to theſe ſignals, let Piedro in, told him that none of his

comrades were yet come, and left him in a room by himſelf. He was pale, and trembling, and felt a cold dew ſpread over him—he had a leaden image of Saint Januarius tied round his neck, which, in the midſt of his wickedneſs, he ſuperſtitiouſly preſerved as a ſort of charm; and on this he kept his eyes ſtupidly fixed, as he ſat alone in this gloomy place. He liſtened, from time to time, but he heard no noiſe at the ſide of the houſe where he was. His accomplices did not arrive, and, in a ſort of impatient terror, the attendant upon an evil conſcience, he flung open the door of his cell, and groped his way through the dark paſſage which he knew led to the public ſhop—he longed to hear ſome noiſe, and to mix with the living. The Jew, when Piedro entered the ſhop, was bargaining with a poor thin looking man about ſome gunpowder.

"I don't deny that it has been wet," ſaid the man; "but ſince it was in the bucket of water, it has been carefully dried. I tell you the ſimple truth—ſo ſoon after the grand eruption of Mount Veſuvius the people of Naples will not taſte fire-works. My poor little rockets, and even my Catharine's-wheel will have no effect—I am glad to part with all I have in this line of buſineſs. A few days ago I had fine things in readineſs for the Counteſs de F.'s birth-day, which was to have been celebrated at the Count's Villa." "Why do you fix your eyes on me friend? What is your diſcourſe to me?" ſaid Piedro, who imagined that the man fixed his eyes upon him as he mentioned the name of the Count's Villa. "I did not know that I fixed my eyes upon you, I was thinking of my fire-works," ſaid the poor man ſimply. "But now that I do look at you, and hear your voice, I recollect hav-

ing had the pleaſure of ſeeing you before." "When? where?" ſaid Piedro. "A great while ago, no wonder you have forgotten me," ſaid the man; "but I can recall the night to your recollection—you were in the ſtreet with me the night I let off that unlucky rocket, which frightened the horſes, and was the cauſe of overturning a lady's coach. Don't you remember the circumſtance?" "I have a confuſed recollection of ſome ſuch thing," ſaid Piedro, in great embarraſſment, and he looked ſuſpiciouſly at this man, in doubt whether he was cunning and wanted to ſound him, or whether he was ſo ſimple as he appeared. "You did not perhaps hear then," continued the man, "that there was a great ſearch made, after the overturn, for a fine diamond croſs, belonging to the lady in the carriage—that lady, though I did not know it till lately, was the Counteſs de F." "I know nothing of the mat-

ter," interrupted Piedro, in great agitation. His confuſion was ſo marked, that the fire-work maker could not avoid taking notice of it, and a ſilence of ſome moments enſued. The Jew, more practiſed in diſſimulation than Piedro, endeavoured to turn the man's attention back to his rockets and his gun powder—agreed to take the gun-powder—paid for it in haſte, and was, though apparently unconcerned, eager to get rid of him. But this was not ſo eaſily done; the man's curioſity was excited, and his ſuſpicions of Piedro were increaſed every moment by all the dark changes of his countenance. Piedro, overpowered with the ſenſe of guilt, ſurpriſed at the unexpected mention of the diamond croſs, and of the Count de F.'s villa, ſtood like one convicted, and ſeemed fixed to the ſpot, without power of motion. "I want to look at the

old cambric that you ſaid you had—that would do for making—that you could let me have cheap, for artificial flowers," ſaid the fire-work maker to the Jew; and as he ſpoke his eye from time to time looked towards Piedro. Piedro felt for the leaden image of the Saint, which he wore round his neck; the ſtring which held it cracked, and broke with the pull he gave it. This ſlight circumſtance affected his terrified and ſuperſtitious mind more than all the reſt. He imagined, that at this moment his fate was decided; that Saint Januarius deſerted him, and that he was undone. He precipitately followed the poor fire-work man the inſtant he left the ſhop, and ſeizing hold of his arm, whiſpered, "I muſt ſpeak to you." "Speak then," ſaid the man, aſtoniſhed. "Not here, this way," ſaid he, drawing him towards the dark

paſſage; "what I have to ſay muſt not be overheard. You are going to the Count de F.'s, are not you?" "I am," ſaid the man. He was going there to ſpeak to the Counteſs about ſome artificial flowers, but Piedro thought he was going to ſpeak to her about the diamond croſs. "You are going to give information againſt me? Nay, hear me, I confeſs, that I purloined that diamond croſs; but I can do the Count a great ſervice, upon condition that he pardons me. His villa is to be attacked this night by four well armed men; they will ſet out five hours hence; I am compelled, under the threat of aſſaſſination, to accompany them—but I ſhall do no more. I throw myſelf upon the Count's mercy. Haſten to him—we have no time to loſe." The poor man, who heard this confeſſion, eſcaped from Piedro the moment he looſed his arm.

With all poſſible expedition he ran to the Count's palace in Naples, and related to him all that had been ſaid by Piedro. Some of the Count's ſervants, on whom he could moſt depend, were at a diſtant part of the city attending their miſtreſs; but the Engliſh gentleman offered the ſervices of his man Arthur. Arthur no ſooner heard the buſineſs, and underſtood that Franciſco was in danger, than he armed himſelf without ſaying one word, ſaddled his Engliſh horſe, and was ready to depart before any one elſe had finiſhed their exclamations and conjectures. "But we are not to ſet out yet, it is but four miles to Torre del Greco; the ſbirri (officers of juſtice) are ſummoned—they are to go with us—we muſt wait for them." They waited, much againſt Arthur's inclination, a conſiderable time for theſe ſbirri. At length they ſet out,

and, juſt as they reached the villa, the flaſh of a piſtol was ſeen from one of the apartments in the houſe. The robbers were there—this piſtol was ſnapped by their Captain at poor Franciſco, who had bravely aſſerted, that he would, as long as he had life, defend the property committed to his care. The piſtol miſſed fire—for it was charged with ſome of the damaged powder, which the Jew had bought that evening from the fire-work maker, and which he had ſold as excellent immediately afterwards to his favourite cuſtomers, the robbers who met at his houſe. Arthur, as ſoon as he perceived the flaſh of the piece, preſſed forward through all the apartments, followed the Count's ſervants and the officers of juſtice; at the appearance, the ſudden appearance, of ſo many armed men, the robbers ſtood diſmayed. Arthur eagerly ſhook Franciſco's hand, congratulating

him upon his ſafety, and did not perceive, till he had given him ſeveral rough friendly ſhakes, that his arm was wounded, and that he was pale with the loſs of blood. "It is not much, only a ſlight wound," ſaid Franciſco; "one that I ſhould have eſcaped, if I had been upon my guard; but the ſight of a face I little expected to ſee in ſuch company took from me all preſence of mind; and one of the ruffians ſtabbed me here in the arm, whilſt I ſtood in ſtupid aſtoniſhment."

"Oh! take me to priſon! take me to priſon—I am weary of life—I am a wretch not fit to live," cried Piedro, holding his hands to be tied by the ſbirri.

He was taken to priſon the next morning; and as he paſſed through the ſtreets of Naples, he was met by ſeveral of thoſe who had known him when he

was a child. "Aye," ſaid they, as he went by, "his father encouraged him in cheating when he was *but a child;* and ſee what he is come to now he is a man." He was ordered to remain twelve months in ſolitary confinement. His captain and his accomplices were ſent to the gallies, and the Jew was baniſhed from Naples. And now, having gotten theſe villains out of our way, let us return to honeſt Franciſco. His wound was ſoon healed. Arthur was no bad ſurgeon, for he let his patient get well as faſt as he pleaſed; and Carlo and Roſetta nurſed him with ſo much kindneſs, that he was almoſt ſorry to find himſelf perfectly recovered. "Now that you are able to go out," ſaid Franciſco's father to him, "you muſt come and look at my new houſe, my dear ſon." "Your new houſe, father?" "Yes, ſon, and a charming one it is,

and a handſome piece of land near it—all at a ſafe diſtance too from Mount Veſuvius; and can you gueſs how I came by it?—it was given to me for having a good ſon." "Yes," cried Carlo, "the inhabitants of Reſina, and ſeveral who had property near Torre del Greco, and whoſe houſes and lives were ſaved by your intrepidity in carrying the materials for the fire-works and the gunpowder out of this dangerous place, went in a body to the Duke, and requeſted that he would mention your name and theſe facts to the king, who, amongſt the grants he has made to the ſufferers by the late eruption of Mount Veſuvius, has been pleaſed to ſay, that he gives this houſe and garden to your father, becauſe you have ſaved the property and lives of many of his ſubjects."

The value of a handſome portion of the furniture, plate, &c. in the Count

de F.'s Villa, was, according to the Count's promiſe, given to him; and this money he divided between his own family and that of the good carpenter, who firſt put a pencil into his hands. Arthur would not accept of any preſent from him. To Mr. L——, the Engliſh gentleman, he offered one of his own drawings—a fruit piece. "I like this very well," ſaid Arthur, as he examined the drawing; "but I ſhould like this melon better if it was a little bruiſed. It is now three years ago ſince I was going to buy that bruiſed melon from you; you ſhewed me your honeſt nature then, though you were but a boy, and I have found you the ſame ever ſince.—A good beginning makes a good ending—an honeſt boy will make an honeſt man, and honeſty is the beſt policy, as you have proved to all who wanted the proof I hope." "Yes," added

Franciſco's father, "I think it is pretty plain, that Piedro the cunning has not managed quite ſo well as Franciſco the honeſt."

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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